

History Of The Jews In  
Russia And Poland:  
From The Earliest  
Times Until The  
Present Day



Simon M. Dubnow



**HISTORY OF THE JEWS  
IN RUSSIA AND POLAND  
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY**

BY

**S. M. DUBNOW**

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

BY

**I. FRIEDLAENDER**

**VOLUME III**

**FROM THE ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS II. UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY  
WITH BIBLIOGRAPHY AND INDEX**

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## NOTE

The present volume, which concludes Dubnow's "History of the Jews in Russia-Poland," contains, in addition to the text, an extensive bibliography and an index to the entire work. In the bibliography an enormous amount of material has been collected, and it is arranged in such a way as to enable the reader to ascertain the sources upon which the author drew. It is thus in the nature of notes, and is therefore arranged according to the chapters of the book. The index, which has been prepared with the utmost care by the translator, is really a synopsis of Jewish history in Russia and Poland, and its usefulness cannot be over-rated.

Professor Friedlaender, the translator of this work, who left the United States at the beginning of this year, did not see the proof of the bibliography and index.

The tragic news has just reached this country that Professor Friedlaender was murdered under the most revolting circumstances. An eminent scholar and writer has thus been removed from American Jewry, and the entire house of Israel together with the Jewish Publication Society of America, on whose committee Professor Friedlaender served with conspicuous merit for a number of years, mourns this irreparable loss.

JULY, 1920.



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## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS II.

#### I. CONTINUED POLICY OF OPPRESSION

In the course of the nineteenth century every change of throne in Russia was accompanied by a change of policy. Each new reign formed, at least in its beginning, a contrast to the one which had preceded it. The reigns of Alexander I. and Alexander II. marked a departure in the direction of liberalism; those of Nicholas I. and Alexander III. were a return to the ideas of reaction. In accordance with this historic schedule, Alexander III. should have been followed by a sovereign of liberal tendencies. But in this case the optimistic expectations with which the new ruler was welcomed both by his Russian and his Jewish subjects were doomed to disappointment. The reign of Nicholas II. proved the most gloomy and most reactionary of all. A man of limited intelligence, he attempted to play the rôle of an unlimited autocrat, fighting in blind rage against the cause of liberty.

This reactionary tendency came to light in the very beginning of the new reign. During the first few months after the accession of Nicholas II. to the throne—between November, 1894, and January, 1895—the liberal Zemstvo assemblies of nine governments,<sup>1</sup> in presenting addresses of loyalty to the new Tsar, were bold enough to voice the hope that he would eventually invite the representatives of these autonomous institutions

[<sup>1</sup> See on the Zemstvos, vol. II, p. 173, n. 1.]



to participate in the legislative acts of the Government. This first timid request for constitutional rights met with a harsh and clumsy rebuff. In his reply to the deputation representing the nobility, the Zemstvos, and the municipalities, which appeared in the Winter Palace on January 17, 1895, to convey to him the greetings of the Russian people, the Tzar made the following pronouncement:

In several Zemstvo assemblies there have been heard lately the voices of men carried away by preposterous delusions concerning the participation of the representatives of the Zemstvos in the affairs of the inner administration. Let everybody know that I shall guard the principle of autocracy as firmly and uncompromisingly as it was guarded by my never-to-be-forgotten deceased parent.

This veiled threat was enough to intimidate the faint-hearted constitutionalists. It was universally felt that the autocratic régime was still firmly entrenched and that the old constitution of "enforced safety"—this charter of privileges bestowed upon the police to the disadvantage of the people—was still unshaken. The hope of seeing Russia transformed from a state based upon brute force into a body politic resting upon law and order was dashed to the ground.

The Jews, too, were quick to realize that the war which had been waged against them by Alexander III. for fourteen long years was far from being at an end. True, the addresses of welcome presented in 1895 by the Jewish communities of Russia to the young Tzar on the occasion of his marriage elicited an official expression of thanks, which was not marred by any rebuke for harboring "preposterous delusions." But this was purely for the reason that these addresses were not tainted by

[<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 246.]

any allusions to the hopes for emancipation entertained by the Jews. There was nothing, indeed, which might have warranted such hopes. The same dignitaries who, under Alexander III., had stood forth as the champions of savage and Semitic pollution, remained at the helm of Russian affairs: Polysenskiy, the head of the Holy Synod; Durnovo, the Minister of the Interior—towards the end of 1895 he made room for Joromykin, who was not a whit less reactionary—and Witte, the double-faced Minister of Finance, who was anxious at that time to fall in line with the reactionary influences then in vogue. The thoughts which occupied Polysenskiy's mind at the beginning of the new reign may be gauged from the report submitted by him to the Tsar in 1895, concerning the state of affairs in the Greek Catholic Church. The "Grand Secretary" was deeply worried by the alleged fact that the Jews were exercising a dangerous influence over the religious life of their Christian domestics.

The milice, after living among Jews for several years, prove nearly forgetful of the cross-Christian faith. But even the minds of the adults are being undermined. The priests who have to the confessions of the domestics employed in Jewish homes are stricken with horror on learning of the abominable blasphemies uttered by the Jews against Christianity, the Saviour, and the Holy Virgin, which, through the domestics, are likely to be current among the people.

These charges, which might have been readily quoted from Remanster writings of the medieval guardians of the Church, are intended as a means of preparing the young sovereign for a proper understanding of the Jewish problem. They are brought forward by the procurator-in-chief of the Holy Synod, the same ecclesiastical functionary who inflicted severe



persecutions on the Russian dissidents and soon afterwards forced the Dukhobortzy, an Evangelistic sect, to leave their native land and to seek refuge in Canada. Having failed to realize his great ambition—to clear Russia of its Jewish population, with the help of Baron Hirsch's millions<sup>1</sup>—Pobyedonostzev resumed his professional duties, which were those of a procurator<sup>2</sup> of Jewry on behalf of the Holy Synod, the *sanctum officium* of the militant Greek-Orthodox Church.

Not content with brandishing his rusty ecclesiastical sword, Pobyedonostzev resorted to secular weapons in his fight against the hated tribe. When, in 1898, the Council of the Jewish Colonization Association in Paris sent a delegation to St. Petersburg to apply to the Government for permission to settle Russian Jews as agricultural farmers in Russia itself, Pobyedonostzev replied: "Nos cadres ne sont pas prêts pour vous recevoir,"<sup>3</sup> and he went out of his way to explain to the delegates that the Jews were a very clever people, intellectually and culturally superior to the Russians, and, therefore, dangerous to them: "The Jews are displacing us, and this does not suit us." When questioned as to the future of Russian Jewry under the system of uninterrupted persecutions, Pobyedonostzev on one occasion made the following candid statement: "One-third will die out, one-third will leave the country, and one-third will be completely dissolved in the surrounding population."

Such being the attitude towards the Jewish problem of the ruling spheres of Russia, any improvement in the situation of

[<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 421.]

[<sup>2</sup> The Russian title for a prosecuting attorney.]

[<sup>3</sup> "Our frame (of society) is not ready to receive you."]

Russian Jewry was manifestly out of the question. Even where such an improvement might have been found to tally with the anti-Semitic policies of the Government, it was ruled out as soon as it bade fair to benefit the Jews. Thus, when in 1895, the governor of Vilna, in his "most humble report" to the Tsar, advocated the desirability of abrogating the Pale of Settlement for the purpose "of weakening the detrimental influence of Jewry," since the latter constituted a majority of the population in the cities of the Western region,<sup>1</sup> Nicholas II penned the following resolution: "I am far from sharing this view of the governor." The leaders of Russian Jewry knew full well that the wind which was blowing from the heights of the Russian throne was unfavorable to them, and their initial hopefulness gave way speedily to a feeling of depression. A memorandum drafted at that time by prominent Jews of St. Petersburg, with the intention of submitting it to one of the highest functionaries at the Russian court, mirrors this pessimistic frame of mind:

The Russian Jews are deprived of that powerful lever for intellectual and moral advancement which is designated as the hope for a better future. They are fully aware of the fact that the highest authority in the land, influenced by the distorted information concerning the Jews, which is systematically procured to it by officials acting from avaricious or other selfish motives, is exceedingly unfavorable to the Jews. They must resign themselves to the fact that there is actually no possibility of directing the attention of the Tsar and Sovereign to the true state of affairs, and that even those dignitaries who themselves act justly and tolerantly towards the Jews are afraid of putting in a good word for them for fear of being charged with favoritism towards them.

<sup>1</sup> See on this term, vol. II, p. 14, n. 1.]

<sup>2</sup> See on the meaning of this term, vol. I, p. 26, n. 1.]

### 3. THE MARTYRDOM OF THE MOSCOW COMMUNITY

The attitude which officials of high rank were prone to adopt towards the Jews was luridly illustrated at that time in Moscow. It will be remembered that the small Jewish colony which had been left in the second Russian capital after the cruel expulsions of 1891 was barred from holding religious services in its large synagogue which had been closed by order of Alexander III.<sup>1</sup> In view of the forthcoming festivities in honor of the coronation of Nicholas II., which were to be held in Moscow in the spring of 1896, the representatives of the Jewish community of the second Russian capital petitioned the governor-general of Moscow, Grand Duke Sergius Alexandrovitch, to secure for them the Tsar's permission to have their synagogue open at least during the coronation days, "as a special act of grace, in order that the Jews of Moscow may be given a chance to celebrate the joyful event with due solemnity." But the grand duke, maddened by Jew-hatred, notified the petitioners through the Chief of Police that their petition was "an insolent violation of the imperial will" and could not be considered.

The martyrdom of the Moscow community, the heritage of the past reign, stood out like a black stain even upon the gloomy background of the new era. An imperial ukase issued in 1892 had decreed that the structure of the scaled-up Moscow synagogue should be sold to the highest bidder unless it was converted into a charitable institution.<sup>2</sup> The community was naturally anxious to prevent the desecration of its sanctuary and to preserve the edifice for better days to come. With this end in view it placed in the synagogue building

[<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 423.]

[<sup>2</sup> See vol. II, p. 424.]



the trade school for Jewish children which had been established in memory of Alexander II. The anti-Semitic authorities of Moscow wanted in this step a wicked design. The governor-general got into communication with the Ministers of the Interior and of Public Instruction, and, as a result, on May 27, 1896, the executive board of the Moscow community received the following order: "To stop the admission of pupils to the trade school and to close the school altogether after the completion of the prescribed course of studies by the present contingent of students. Thereupon the Jews of Moscow made another attempt to save the synagogue by transferring to their school and asylum for poor and orphaned children, the so-called Talmud Torah. This attempt, too, was frustrated by the Muscovite Hamans. On October 28, 1897, the governor-general announced that, after consultation with the Minister of the Interior, the decision had been reached to close the asylum, which sheltered about one hundred poor children, on the fanciful ground that these children might just as well receive their instruction in Russian educational establishments. The underlying motive of the new order was unmistakably revealed in its latter part: "Unless in the course of two months the building of the synagogue will be reconstructed and so altered as to be fitted for a hospital or a similar charitable institution, it will be sold at public auction."

Once more the Jewish community endeavored to save its sanctuary, which its enemies had made up their minds to destroy. The synagogue structure was rebuilt to meet the purposes of a hospital and a shelter. But the commission appointed by the governor-general to examine the alterations found that they were not sufficiently extensive and therefore suggested

that the interior of the synagogue should be entirely remodelled so as to exclude the possibility of its ever being used for devotional purposes. The struggle centering around the alterations dragged on for another eight years—until the revolution of 1905 and the assassination of the ferocious governor-general. It was then that the Jews finally succeeded in releasing their sanctuary from the death sentence which had been passed upon it.

The motive which animated the Muscovite Jew-haters was perfectly evident: it was their fervent desire to wipe out the last remnants of the local Jewish community by subjecting the Jews to religious and administrative persecutions and thereby compelling them to flee from the center of Greek Orthodoxy. The growth of the Jewish settlement at Moscow was checked in ruthless fashion. The Jewish artisans had been expelled as far back as 1891, but the Jewish merchants who purchased their right of residence in the second Russian capital at the annual cost of one thousand rubles—the tax levied on first guild members—had been allowed to remain. Moreover, as the largest industrial center of Russia, Moscow naturally attracted a goodly number of Jewish merchants who came there temporarily on business. These “newcomers” were handled more severely than are alien enemies in war-time. Police detectives prowled about on the streets and at the railroad stations, seizing passers-by who happened to exhibit a “Semitic” countenance, and dragging them to the police stations, “with a view to the examination of their right of residence in Moscow.” The unfortunate Jews, whose documents did not comply with all the technicalities of the law, were expelled at once. The *Moscow Police News* carried a regular

advertisement offering a reward for the capture of "rightless" Jews. In October, 1897, the Moscow Chief of Police announced a premium of equal amount for the capture of one Jew or of two burglars.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the Russian Government took a most effective step towards preventing the increase of the Jewish population of Moscow. On January 22, 1899, an imperial ukase was issued forthwith prohibiting Jewish merchants of the first guild from settling in Moscow, unless they shall have obtained special permission from the Minister of Finance and from the governor-general of Moscow, it being beforehand agreed that no such permission should be granted. The same ukase enacted a number of offensive discriminations against the Jewish merchants already settled in Moscow by depriving them of their vote in the commercial associations, and by other similar devices. On a subsequent occasion the ediction was candidly made that all these measures were prompted by the desire "to rid as far as possible the government of Moscow of the Jews already settled there on a legal basis."

### 3. RESTRICTIONS IN THE RIGHT OF RESIDENCE

Whereas the régime of Grand Duke Sergius in Moscow represented an acute stage of Judaismophobia, manifesting itself in cruelty of an exceptional character, the central Government in St. Petersburg exhibited the same disease in a more

<sup>1</sup> These barbarities were suspended only for a few days during that year, while the International Congress of Medicine was holding its sessions in Moscow. The police were ordered to stop these blood-calls upon the Jews for fear of compromising Russia in the eyes of Western Europe, since it was to be expected that the membership of the Congress would include medical celebrities with "Hamitic" features.

"normal" form. Here, the oppression of the Jews was pursued systematically and quietly, and was carried on as one of the most important functions of the public administration. The sacramental institution of the Pale of Settlement and the other mainstays of political anti-Semitism were zealously guarded by the faithful watchdogs of Russian reaction—the various Ministers of the Interior who followed one another between the years 1895 and 1904: Durnovo (until the autumn of 1895), Goremykin (1896-1899), Sipyagin (1899-1902), and Plehve (1902-1904). True, during the régime of the last two Ministers the anti-Semitic temperature rose above normal, but it was only due to the fact that the increased revolutionary propaganda of those days had generally stimulated the powers of reaction to a greater display of energy. Quite aside from these exceptional conditions, the rigid consistency in enforcing the restrictive laws was sufficient to account for many tragedies in the life of the Jews, while the despotism of the provincial authorities aggravated the situation still further and turned the tragedies into catastrophes.

As far as the Pale of Settlement is concerned, the Government continued its old-time policy of cramping up the Jews within the area of the cities and towns by shielding the villages carefully against the influx of Jews. Since the promulgation of the "Temporary Rules" in 1882, the authorities of St. Petersburg had been aiming at the gradual elimination of those rural Jewish "old timers" who had been allowed under those rules to remain in the villages.<sup>1</sup> They had been looking for-

<sup>1</sup> The "Temporary Rules" were not given retroactive force, and those settled in the villages before the promulgation of the law of May 2, 1882, were accordingly permitted to stay there. [See vol II, p. 311.]



ward to the time when the eyes of the Russian *mir* would no more be offended by the sight of a Jew. But this pious wish did not materialize quickly enough. Several governors put forth the simple proposition to expel all Jews from the villages, not excluding those who had been settled there for a long time. This step, however, was deemed too radical. The Minister of Finance, Witte, wished to solve the problem in a different way. He sought to persuade the Tsar that the introduction of the state liquor monopoly would automatically have the effect of forcing the Jews to leave the country-side, inasmuch as the liquor traffic formed the principal occupation of the village Jews.

Witte's conjecture was to a certain degree borne out by the facts. By the end of the nineties the Jewish country population of Russia had been considerably reduced. Nevertheless there was no relief in sight. For the lust of the administration had grown in proportion. The governors and the other gubernatorial authorities resorted to all kinds of cunning devices to force the Jews out of the villages or out of the railroad stations which were situated outside the town limits. The Christian land owners frequently complained about these deportations, and petitioned the governors to permit the Jewish grain merchants, who were engaged in buying and shipping the grain from the imperial store-houses, to reside at the railroad stations. The Senate was compelled over and over again to pass upon the appeals of illegally deported Jews and to enter into an examination of all kinds of hair-splitting questions involved in the manipulation of the anti-Jewish laws by the lower courts, whether, for instance, an old time Jewish villager who returns to his home after a brief absence is to be regarded as



a new settler who has no right to live in the country, or whether a Jew who lives on an estate which happens to be situated in two contiguous villages is allowed to remove from the one to the other. As a rule the authorities decided these questions against the Jews, though the most revolting decisions of this kind were later reversed by the Senate.

In connection with the prohibition of residence outside the cities, a new problem had arisen in Jewish life—the “summer resort question.” The authorities frequently prohibited Jewish families from spending the summer in the outskirts of the cities if a particular resort or cottage was found to be situated outside the city line. Thousands of Jewish families were thus deprived of an opportunity to rest in God’s free nature during the summer months, and to breathe the fresh air of the fields and forests, for no other reason than that they were Jews—a new variety of territorially affixed city serfs.

The law was just as merciless in the case of Jews afflicted with disease. The watering-places situated outside the towns were barred to Jewish sufferers who wished to take a cure there. The Crimean watering-place Yalta, in the neighborhood of the imperial summer resort Livadia, was the object of particular vigilance, having been barred to the Jews by order of the dying Alexander III.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish consumptives who had managed to obtain “illegal” access to this spa were pitilessly expelled. The following incident, which was reported at that time in the Russian press, may serve as an illustration of this ruthless policy:

The wife of a [Jewish] physician had come to Yalta to improve her shattered health. While she was suffering from severe blood-

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[<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 428 *et seq.*]

spitting, a policeman invaded the bedroom of the sick woman, insisting on her giving a written pledge to leave the place within twenty-four hours. The patient was terribly frightened. On the following day the deportation was stopped in consequence of the testimony of her physician that the slightest motion was fraught with danger to the invalid. But the fright and uncertainty had intensified the cough, the young woman became worse, and soon afterwards died.

As it happened, the action of the police was subsequently found to be entirely unwarranted; for, as the wife of a physician, this victim of bureaucratic heartlessness was, even according to the letter of the law, entitled to the right of residence in Yalta.

A similar case was that of a sick Jewish student who had been sent by his physicians to Yalta to cure his lungs. He was expelled in the dead of winter and deported under a police convoy, together with a batch of prisoners, to Sevastopol, notwithstanding the fact that he was in a feverish condition. The correspondent of a local paper in Sevastopol reported that "along the entire road from the harbor to the prison, which was traversed by the batch, passers-by would stop in their walk, staggered by the extraordinary spectacle." The sufferer appealed to the Senate, but the latter found that the orders of the police "contained nothing contrary to the law." The highest tribunal of the empire went with equanimity on record that a Jewish student was liable to the penalty of being arrested and marched under a police escort, together with criminal offenders, for an attempt to heal his lungs in the warm southern climate.

But no place in the empire could vie as regards hostility to the Jews with the city of Kiev—this inferno of Russian

Israel. Though surrounded on all sides by a string of towns and townlets with a dense Jewish population, the southwestern metropolis was guarded by a host of police watchdogs against the invasion of "aliens." Apart from the "privileged" Jews who formed part of the permanent population, the police were forced to admit into the city Jewish visitors who came to Kiev for a few days to attend to their affairs. Yet, haunted by the fear lest these visitors might stay there too long, the police arranged *oblavas*, or raids, to hunt them down like stray dogs. About once a week, during the night, the police would raid certain hostelries in which the Jews were wont to stop, put those that were caught under arrest, and then expel them from the confines of the city. This additional heavy "night work" called for a larger police staff, and to meet this increased expenditure, an annual sum of 15,000 rubles was appropriated—from the proceeds of the Jewish meat tax. This revenue, collected from the Jews for the purpose of maintaining the charitable and educational institutions of the Jewish communities, was now used to pay the police agents to enable them to hunt down these Jews and expel them in merciless fashion. To put it more plainly, the convict, after being sentenced to be hanged, was forced to buy the rope. The methods of the Russian inquisition gradually reached the top notch of efficiency. Even the "*Kievlanin*" ("The Kievlanian"), the anti-Semitic official organ of Kiev, was bound to confess on one occasion that "in the course of the month of July (of the year 1901) things have taken place in Kiev which are hardly conceivable."

As far as the general disabilities are concerned, the entire area of the Russian empire outside the Pale of Settlement,

though open to foreigners of all nationalities, remained hermetically closed to the Jewish citizens of Russia, and the borders of that prohibited area were guarded even more rigorously than they had been during the previous reign. In the consistent enforcement of this principle the Government did not shrink from the most revolting extremes. A law passed in 1886 interdicted Jewish soldiers from spending outside the Pale of Settlement even the brief leave of absence which they were granted during their term of military service. A Jewish soldier serving in a regiment which was stationed, let us say, in St. Petersburg, Moscow, or even in far-off Siberia, was forced, under this law, to travel hundreds and even thousands of miles to the Pale of Settlement to spend his month of furlough there, being denied the right to remain in the city in which he was discharging his military duty, and it made no difference even if the furlough was granted to him for the purpose of recuperating his health.

In many places of the empire, the whimsicality of the local authorities in construing the law of residence was of a nature to suggest that they had no other end in view except that of making sport of the Jews. The administration of Siberia, for instance, invented the following regulation: a Jewish merchant or artisan who is registered in one of the Siberian cities shall have the right only to live in the particular city of his registration, and in no other. Since very many Jews resided outside the localities of their accidental registration, a transmigration of Siberian Jewry was the result. The Jews registered, *e. g.*, in Tomsk, though they might have lived from the day of their birth in Traurak, were deported in batches to Tomsk, meeting on the way parties of exiled Jews from



Tomak who had the misfortune of having their names entered upon the records of Irkutsk. Human beings were shuffled like a pack of cards. This revolting practice of the Siberian authorities, which had begun at the end of the preceding reign, was sustained by the Senate in a decision handed down in 1897.

#### 4. THE ECONOMIC COLLAPSE OF RUSSIAN JEWRY

The result of all these persecutions was the complete economic collapse of Russian Jewry. Speaking generally, the economic structure of the Russian Jews experienced violent upheavals during the first years of Nicholas II.'s reign. The range of Jewish economic endeavor, circumscribed though it was, was narrowed more and more. In 1894, the law placing the liquor trade under Government control was put into effect by Witte, the Minister of Finance. Catering to the prejudices of the ruling spheres of Russia, Witte had already endeavored to convince Alexander III. that the liquor state monopoly would have the effect of completely undermining "Jewish exploitation," the latter being primarily bound up with the sale of liquor in the towns and villages. In view of this, the monopoly was introduced with particular zeal in the western governments, where a little later, in the course of 1896-1898, during the reign of Nicholas II., all private pot-houses were replaced by official liquor stores, the so-called "imperial bar-rooms." In consequence of this reform, tens of thousands of Jewish families who had derived their livelihood either directly from the liquor trade, or indirectly from occupations connected with it, such as the keeping of inns and hostelrys, were deprived of their means of subsistence. It goes without saying that, as far as the moral aspect of the problem was concerned, the best elements of Russian Jewry welcomed this reform,



which bade fair to wipe out an ugly stain on the escutcheon of the Jewish people—the liquor traffic bequeathed to the Jews by ancient Poland. Known as the most sober people on earth, the Jews had been placed in the tragic position that thousands of them, in their search for a piece of bread, were forced to serve as a medium for promoting the pernicious Russian drunkenness. The memory of the days when the Jewish nation was the breeding place of pogroms, in which the Russian peasants and burghers filled themselves with Jewish blood, and to fortify themselves in their infamous work of demolishing the homes of the Jews, was still fresh in their minds. Unwillingly would the Jewish people have yielded its monopoly of the liquor trade to the Russian barroom keepers and to the Russian Government who seemed genuinely attracted toward it, had it only been allowed to pursue other methods of earning a livelihood. But in closing the avenue of the liquor traffic to two hundred thousand Jews, the Government did not even think of removing the special restrictions which barred their way to other lines of endeavor. Having been robbed of the scanty livelihood they derived from their country vine, thousands of rural victims of the state monopoly flocked into the cities, only to crash with a host of urban victims of the same reform who had also been deprived of their means of subsistence. The growth of the proletariat within the Pale of Settlement, both in business and in the trades, assumed alarming proportions. The observers of economic life in the Pale, such as the well-known Russian economist Subbotin and others, called attention to the frightful increase of pauperism in that region. Between 1894 and 1896 the number of Jewish families in need of assistance increased twenty-seven per cent. as compared with former years. In 1897, the number of Jews

without definite occupations amounted in certain cities to fifty per cent and more. The number of destitute Jews applying for help before the Passover festival reached unheard of proportions, amounting in Odessa, Vilna, Minsk, Kovno, and other cities to forty and even fifty per cent of the total Jewish population. The crop failures of 1899 and 1900 in the south of Russia resulted in a terrible famine among the imppecunious Jewish masses. Whereas the peasants who suffered from the same calamity received financial assistance from the Government, the Jews had to resort to self-help, to the collection of funds throughout the empire to which only here and there liberal Christians added their mites.

Many of these Jewish proletarians were willing to take up agriculture, but the "Temporary Rules" of 1882 blocked their way to the country-side, and made it impossible for them to buy or even lease a piece of land. Prominent Jews of St. Petersburg, such as Baron Gunsburg and others, petitioned the Government to allow the Jews to purchase small parcels of land for personal use, but, after long deliberations, their petition was rejected. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, the ruling spheres of the Russian empire proved more anti-Semitic than at the beginning of the same century, when the Government of Alexander I. and even that of Nicholas I. had endeavored to promote agriculture among the Jews and had established the Jewish agricultural colonies in the south of Russia.<sup>1</sup> The mania of oppression went so far as to prohibit

<sup>1</sup> According to the statistics of 1898-1901, some 150,000 Jews in Russia engaged in agrarian pursuits. Of these, 51,539 were occupied with raising corn in the colonies, 64,563 engaged in special branches of agrarian economy, 19,930 held land as owners or leasees, and 13,901 were engaged in temporary farm labor.

the Jews from buying or leasing parcels of land which were part of a city, but happened to be situated outside the city line. A rich Jew of Minsk, by the name of Pollak, petitioned, in 1897, the local Town Council to sell him a piece of suburban property for the establishment of a Jewish agricultural farm, but his petition was refused. This refusal was thoroughly consistent. For the fact that the Jews were forbidden to own land made the training of Jews in the art of agriculture entirely superfluous. It may be added that this prohibition of land ownership was upheld by the Government even in the case of the Jewish students who had completed their course in the school of the Jewish Agricultural Farm near Odessa.

Similar methods were employed to check the development of arts and crafts, which were widely represented among the Jews, but stood on a very low technical level. Even the efforts to organize mutual help among the working classes were blocked by the Government in all kinds of ways. The well-known Jewish millionaire, Brodski, of Kiev, wishing to assist the toiling masses without distinction of creed, offered to open a trade bank in that city and to contribute towards that purpose the sum of 120,000 rubles. When, in 1895, he submitted the constitution of the proposed bank to the local authorities for their approval, he was required to insert a clause to the effect that the directors and the chairman of the bank council should always be Christians and that the council itself should not include more than one Jewish member. To this insolent demand Brodski made the only fitting retort: "Being myself a Jew, I cannot possibly agree that the constitution of an establishment which is to be founded with the money contributed by me and which is to bear my name shall contain

restrictions affecting my coreligionists." He naturally withdrew his offer, and Kiev was deprived of a trade bank. The fact that the failure of the project also affected the Christian artisans did not disturb the authorities in the least. It was enough of a compensation that the Jews were made to suffer not only materially, but also morally, and the purpose of the highly-placed Jew-baiters was accomplished.

#### 5. PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

In the domain of those liberal professions to which the Jewish intellectuals, being barred from entering the civil service, were particularly attracted, the law went to almost any length in its endeavor to keep them closed to the Jew. The legal career had been blocked to them ever since the passage of the law of 1589, which made the admission of a properly qualified Jew to the bar dependent upon the granting of a special permission by the Minister of Justice. In the course of a whole decade, the Minister found it possible to grant this permission only to one Jew, who, it may be added, had sat on the bench for twenty-five years—there were two or three such "relics," dating back to the liberal era of Alexander II. In consequence of this provision, the proportion of Jews at the bar, which prior to the enactment of the restriction had reached from fourteen to twenty-two per cent, was reduced to nine per cent. In 1897, a committee appointed by the Government was considering the proposal to place the disability on the statute books and to establish a ten per cent norm for Jewish lawyers. The reasons advanced by the committee for the proposed restriction were of the distinctly medieval variety:



The conduct of a lawyer is determined by the impulses of his will, of his conscience,—in other words, that sphere of his inner life which finds its manifestation in religion. Now the admission of Jews constitutes a menace, resulting from views peculiar to the Jewish race, which are contrary to Christian morality.

Subsequently, the champions of "Christian morality" on the staff of the Ministry of Justice bethought themselves that it might even be better and nobler to stop the admission of Jews to the bar altogether, and the proposal regarding the percentage norm was tabled. Hundreds upon hundreds of young Jews who had completed their legal education at the universities, or who had acted as assistants to sworn attorneys, saw once more their hopes for the legitimate pursuit of their profession vanish into the air.

Jewish physicians were restricted to private practice and robbed of their right to occupy a Government or public position. Even the autonomous Zemstvo institutions adopted more and more the practice of refusing to appoint Jews, and very frequently the printed advertisements of the Zemstvos offering medical positions contained the stipulation *kromye yevreyev* ("except the Jews").

The scholastic education of the Jewish children was throttled in the same pitiless manner as theretofore. The disgraceful school norm which had been introduced in 1887<sup>1</sup> performed with ever-increasing relentlessness its task of dooming to spiritual death the Jewish youths who were knocking at the doors of the gymnasia and universities. In the beginning of 1898, the post of Minister of Public Instruction, which had been occupied by Dyelanov, was entrusted to Professor Bogolepov of Moscow. While Dyelanov had been occasionally inclined

<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 350.

to soften the rigor of the school norm—it was commonly rumored that this good-natured dignitary could not bear to see a woman cry, and the tearful entreaties of the mothers of the rejected scholars made him sanction the admission of a certain number of Jewish children over and above the established percentage norm—his successor Bogolepov, an academic teacher who had become a gendarme of education, was impervious to any sentiment of pity. In the course of the three years of his administration, he not only refused to admit the slightest departure from the established norm, but attempted to curtail it still further. Thus, orders were issued to calculate the percentage norm of the Jewish applicants for admission to the universities not in its relation to the total number of the annual admissions, but separately for each faculty (1898-1899). This provision was designed to limit the number of Jewish students who flocked to the medical and legal faculties, since, in view of the fact that the Jews were entirely barred from appointments in the general educational institutions, the other faculties did not offer them even a sporting chance of earning a livelihood. The ruthlessness displayed by the Ministry of Public Instruction towards the Jewish youth was officially justified on the ground that certain elements among them were affiliated with the revolutionary movement which, just at that time, had assumed particular intensity in the Russian student body. This sentiment was openly voiced in a circular of the Ministry, issued on May 26, 1901, which makes the following statement: "The disorders which took place at the end of the nineties in the institutions of higher learning testified to the fact that the instigators of these disorders were, to a large extent, persons of non-Russian extraction."

Bogolepov himself, the reactionary Minister of enlightenment, fell a victim of this agitation among the student body. He died from the bullet of a Terrorist who happened to be of unadulterated Russian extraction. His successor, General Vannovsky (1901-1902), though endeavoring to assuage the university disorders by a policy of "kindly solicitude," maintained the former uncompromising attitude as far as the Jews were concerned. In view of the fact that, in spite of all restrictions, the ratio of Jewish students at all universities actually exceeded the norm prescribed by law, the new Minister decreed that the percentage of Jewish admissions be temporarily curtailed in the following proportion: Two per cent for the capitals (instead of the former three per cent), three per cent for the universities outside of the Pale of Settlement (instead of five per cent), and seven per cent for the Pale of Settlement (instead of ten per cent).

Even the restrictions placed upon the admission of the Jews to the gymnasia were intensified. In 1901, Jewish children who had graduated from a *progymnasium*<sup>1</sup> were forbidden to continue their education in the advanced classes of a gymnasium unless there was a free Jewish vacancy within the percentage norm—a truly marvellous contingency. The same policy was extended to the commercial schools established with funds which were provided by the merchant class and the bulk of which came from Jews. In the commercial schools maintained by the commercial associations Jewish children were admitted only in proportion to the contributions of the Jewish merchants toward the upkeep of the particular school. In

[<sup>1</sup>A *progymnasium* is made up of the six (originally four) lower grades of a gymnasium which embraces eight grades.]

private commercial schools, however, percentages of all kinds, varying from ten to fifty per cent, were fixed in the case of Jewish pupils. This provision had the effect that Jewish parents were vitally interested in securing the entrance of as many Christian children as possible in order to increase thereby the number of Jewish vacancies. Occasionally, a Jewish father, in the hope of creating a vacancy for his son, would induce a Christian to send his boy to a commercial school—though the latter, as a rule, offered little attraction for the Christian population—by undertaking to defray all expenses connected with his education. Yet many Jewish children, though enduring all these humiliations, found themselves outside the doors of the intermediate Russian schools.

It is worthy of note that in this attempt at the spiritual extermination of the Jewish children by barring them from intermediate educational institutions the Russian law followed strictly the ancient rule of the Pharaohs: "If it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live." The Government schools for girls were opened to the Jewish population without any restriction, and the influx of Jewesses to these gymnasia was only checked unofficially by the anti-Semitic authorities of this or that institution, thereby turning the tide of applicants in the direction of private girls' schools. But as far as the higher schools were concerned, Jewish girls were subjected to the same restrictions as the boys. The Higher Courses for Women and the Pedagogic Courses in St. Petersburg restricted the admission of Jewesses to five per cent. The constitution of the Medical Institute for Women, founded in 1895, provided at first for the entire exclusion of Jewesses. But in 1897, the doors of



this institution were opened to the hated tribe—just enough to admit them to the extent of three per cent.

It was scarcely to be expected that the Jewish youths who had been keeled out of the Russian school should entertain particularly friendly sentiments towards a régime which wasted their lives, humiliated their dignity, and sullied their souls. The Jewish lad, driven from the doors of the gymnasiums, became an embittered "outsider," who was forced to study at home and from year to year present himself for examination before the school authorities. An immense host of young men and women who found their way likewise to the higher educational institutions in Russia went abroad, flocking to foreign universities and higher professional schools where they learned to estimate at its full value a régime which in their own country denied them the advantages granted to them outside of it. A large number of these college youths returned home permeated with revolutionary ideas—living witnesses to the sagacity of a Government which saw its reason for existence in the suppression of all revolutionary strivings.

#### 6. ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA AND POGROMS

The reactionary Russian press, encouraged and stimulated by the official Jew baiters, engaged in an increasingly ferocious campaign against the Jews. The Russian censorship, known all over for its merciless cruelty, which was throttling the printed word and trembling at the criminal thought of "inciting hatred toward the Government" yet granted untrammelled freedom to those who propagated hatred to Judaism, and thereby committed the equally criminal offence of "inciting one part of the population against the other." The *Notoye*

*Vremya*, the most wide-spread semi-official press organ, and its satellites in the provincial capitals were permitted to do what they pleased. They were free to slander the Jewish religion, the Jewish people, and the Jewish communities. When the famous Dreyfus affair had started in France, the *Novoye Vremya*, the oracle of Russia's ruling spheres, arrayed itself on the side of the Jew-baiters from among the French general staff, and launched a savage campaign of slander against the Jews of the entire globe. Many an article published in the anti-Semitic press was scarcely distinguishable from the proclamations calling upon the mob to massacre the Jews.

By far the most effective propaganda on behalf of pogroms was carried on, sometimes without a conscious realization of the consequences, by the Government itself: by persisting in its anti-Jewish policy. Observing this uninterrupted maltreatment of the Jews on the part of the Russian legislation and administration, which treated the Jews as if they were criminals, witnessing the expulsions inflicted upon the "illegally residing" Jews and the raids engineered against them, watching the constant mockery at the Jewish children who were driven from the doors of the educational institutions, and seeing the endless multitude of other humiliating disabilities, the unenlightened Russian populace necessarily gained the conviction that the extermination of Jewry was a noble and patriotic duty. Coupled with the usual economic and national conflicts, this trend of mind could not but lead to acts of violence.

At the end of the nineties the Russian horizon was darkened again by the ominous shadow of the beginning of the eighties: pogroms, at first sporadic and within circumscribed limits,

broke out again in various parts of the Pale. On February 18 and 19, 1907, an anti-Jewish riot took place in Shigala, a town in the government of Kiev. The following officially inspired account of the episode, in which the facts were undoubtedly toned down, appeared in the *Notoge Vremya*:

At three o'clock in the afternoon an immense crowd of peasants rushed into our town and wrecked completely the stores, homes and warehouses belonging exclusively to the Jews. A large number of rich business places and small stores, as well as hundreds of houses, were demolished by the crowd, which acted, one might say, with elemental passion, desiring to destruction everything that fell into its hands. The town of Shigala, which is celebrated for its flourishing trade and its comparative prosperity, now presents the picture of a city which has been ravaged by a hostile army. Lines of old women and children may be seen moving [into the town] to carry home with them the property of the "Zhids." Of essential importance is the fact that these disorders were undoubtedly prearranged. The local Jews knew of the impending disaster four days before it took place, they spoke about it to the local police chief, but the latter assured them that "nothing is going to happen."

Two months later, on April 16 and 17, the Christian inhabitants of the town of Kautskumenin, in the government of Akherson, indulged in a similar "amusement" at the expense of the Jews. To quote the words of a semi-official report:

A cruel pogrom has taken place. Almost the entire town has been destroyed by an infuriated mob. All Jewish stores were wrecked and the goods found there were thrown about. A part of the merchandise was looted by the rabble. The synagogue alone remained unscathed.

Here, too, it was known beforehand that a pogrom was in the course of preparation. The Jews petitioned the authorities

to avert the catastrophe, but the local police force was found inadequate to cope with the situation.

In both devastated towns the governors of the respective provinces eventually appeared on the scene with detachments of troops, but in the meantime the revolting performances were over. Many rioters were placed under arrest and put on trial. More than sixty were sentenced by the courts to a term in prison from eight to fourteen months. One of the defendants, a Little-Russian peasant, who had been arrested for having taken part in an anti-Jewish riot, voiced his amazement in these characteristic words: "They told us we had permission to beat the Jews, and now it appears that it is all a lie."

A pogrom on a more comprehensive scale, arranged in honor of the Easter festival, and lasting for three days (April 19-21, 1899), was allowed to take place in the city of Nicholayer, the South-Russian port of entry. Bands of rioters, to the number of several thousand, among them many newly arrived Great-Russian day laborers, and a few "intellectual" ring-leaders, fell upon Jewish stores and residences and destroyed or looted their contents, complying faithfully with the established pogrom ritual, while the police and Cossack forces proved "powerless." On the third day, when the news of the freedom accorded to the rioters and robbers at Nicholayer reached the villages in the vicinity, a whole army of peasants, both men and women, numbering some ten thousand, started towards the city on their wagons, with the intention of carrying off the property of the Jews—but they were too late; for in the meantime Cossacks and soldiers had been ordered to stop the pogroms and disperse the rioters. The peasants were driven off and had to return to their villages on their



empty wagons. Exasperated by their failure, the peasants vented their fury upon the Jewish cemetery outside the city, demolishing a large number of tombstones, and then, scattering all over the district, made an attack upon the Jewish population in the neighboring settlements and villages. In the Jewish agricultural colony of Nagartava all farm-houses and stores were wrecked and looted, and the agricultural implements demolished. The Russian peasant was unscrupulously ruining and robbing his Jewish fellow-peasant. In the adjacent colonies, the Jews, being of a robust physique, were able to put up an effective defence.

The only protest against this new outbreak of barbarism was voiced by the "Son of the Fatherland" (*Syn Otyečestva*), a liberal Russian press organ:

When at last—questioned the paper—will that terrible relic of the gloomy era of the Middle Ages take an end? When will there be a stop to this breaking of windows, this beating of men and this wrecking of houses and stores?

This time the orders from St. Petersburg were explicit: the local authorities were commanded to prevent the further spread of the pogrom agitation. The reason for this unaccustomed attitude is not difficult to guess. Two weeks after the Nicholayev atrocities, the first International Hague Conference opened its sessions (May 6-18), having been called at the initiative of the Russian emperor to discuss the question of disarmament, and this Conference must have suggested to the Tzar the advisability of first disarming the anti-Jewish rioters in Russia itself. However, he failed to draw the more important conclusion from the Conference called by him: that it was necessary to stop, or at least to reduce, the constant arming of

his own Government against the Jews and to discard the medieval weapons of oppression and persecution which spelled destruction to an entire nation. This alone is enough to expose the hollowness of the spectacle at the Hague, which had been designed by the feeble-minded Nicholas as a sort of diplomatic entertainment.

That the Russian authorities, when so minded, were fully capable of grappling with the pogrom agitation was demonstrated by the rapidity with which, on a later occasion, they suppressed the anti-Jewish excesses in the Polish city of Chenstokhov (August 19, 1902). In this hotbed of dismal Polish clericalism, the goal of thousands of Catholic pilgrims, who arrive there to worship the Holy Virgin on the "Bright Mountain," a street brawl between a Jewish tradesman and a Polish woman grew, owing to the instigations of Catholic priests, into a monstrous assault upon Jewish houses and stores by a crowd of fifteen thousand Poles. Here, too, the customary shouts were heard: "Beat the Jews! Nothing will happen to us." But the Chenstokhov rioters made a grievous error in their calculation. The protection of the Russian authorities did not extend to the Poles who were not considered politically "dependable," and were known to be equally hostile to the *Zhyda* and the "Moskale."<sup>1</sup> The excesses had started in the morning, and in the evening they were at an end, a volley from the soldiers having put the tremendous crowd to flight. When the case came up before the courts, the public prosecutor pleaded for the severe punishment of the culprits. The guilty Poles were sentenced to penal servitude and to terms

[<sup>1</sup>A contemptuous nickname for Russians customary among the Poles.]

in prison, and in some cases even damages were awarded to the Jewish victims—an extraordinarily rare occurrence in legal proceedings of this kind.

The action of Polish anti-Semites with Russian Jodavojanics brought again to life the old monstrous accusation against the Jews—the ritual murder libel. A Polish servant girl in the employ of David Blumberg, a Jewish barber in Vilna, charged, as she was, in great superstition and being a pious Jew in the hands of fanatical friends, ran out one night (March, 1904) into the street, shouting that her master had wounded her and had tried to squeeze blood from her for the Messiah. A crowd of Christians quickly assembled, and seeing no scratches on the neck and hands of the girl, fell upon Blumberg and gave him a severe beating. The "criminal" was taken to prison, and the prosecuting authorities, listening to the "voice of the people," were zealous in their search for the threads of the crime. The anti-Semitic press launched a well-planned campaign against the Jews in the hope of influencing the judicial verdict. The lower court recognized the fact of the assault, but denied the presence of any murderous intent, and leaving aside the possibility of a ritual murder, sentenced Blumberg to imprisonment for four months. The counsel for the defense, the well-known lawyer Gruzenberg and others, fearing lest this sentence might be considered by the enemies of Judaism as a corroboration of the ritual murder libel, appealed from the verdict of the court, and proved victorious—a decision handed down by the Senate ordered the case to be sent back for a second trial to the District Court of Vilna, and the court of jurymen, after listening to the statements of authoritative experts and the



brilliant speeches of the defence, rendered a verdict of not guilty (February 1, 1902). The prisoner was set at liberty, and the nightmare of the "ritual murder Dreyfusiad" was dispelled for the time being.

Even the Russian stage was made subservient to the purposes of Jew-baiting. A converted Jew by the name of Efron-Litvin, who had joined the anti-Semitic business firm of the *Novoye Vremya*, wrote a libelous play under the title "The Sons of Israel," or "The Smugglers," in which Jews and Judaism were made the subject of the most horrible calumnies. The play was first produced at St. Petersburg, in the theatre controlled by Suvorin, the publisher of the *Novoye Vremya*, and in the course of 1901-1902 it made the rounds of the provincial stage. Everywhere, the Russian Jew-haters welcomed this talentless production, which pictured the Jews as rogues and criminals, and represented the Jewish religion and morality as the fountain-head whence the supposed hatred of the Jews against the Christians derived its origin. Naturally enough the Jews and the best elements among the Russian *intelligenza* looked upon the mere staging of such a play as an incitement to pogroms. They appealed repeatedly to the police, calling upon them to stop the production of a play which was sure to fan national and religious hatred. The police, however, were not guided by the wishes of the Jews, but by those of their enemies. As a result, in a considerable number of cities where the play was presented, such as Smolensk, Oryol, Kishinev, Tiflis, and others, violent demonstrations took place in the theatres. The Jewish spectators and a part of the Russian public, particularly from among the college youth, hissed and hooted, demanding the removal from the

stage of this libel on a whole people. The anti-Semites, in turn, shouted: "Down with the Jews!", and started a fight with the demonstrators. The police, of course, sided with the anti-Semites, attacking the demonstrators and dragging them to the police stations. This agitation led to a number of legal proceedings against the Jews who were charged with disturbing the peace. During the trial of one of these cases (in the city of Oryol), the counsel for the defence used the following argument:

The play inflames the national passions, and makes the national traits of a people the object of ridicule and mockery,—of a people, moreover, which is denied equal rights and has no means of voicing its protest. The production of such a play should never have been permitted, the more so as the police were well acquainted with the agitated state of the public mind.

The argument of the defending attorney was scarcely convincing. For the article of the Russian law which forbids the "incitement of one part of the population against the other" loses its validity when the "other part" means the Jews. ||

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE NATIONAL AWAKENING

#### 1. THE RISE OF POLITICAL ZIONISM

For two decades the sledge hammer of Russian reaction had been descending with crushing force upon the vast community of the six million Russian Jews. Yet in the end it was found that the heavy hammer, to use the well-known simile of Pushkin, instead of shattering the national organism of Jewry, had only helped to steel it and to harden its indestructible spiritual self. The Jewry of Russia showed to the world that it was endowed with an iron constitution, and those that had hoped to crush it by the strokes of their hammer were ultimately forced to admit that they had produced the opposite result. At first it seemed as if the effect of these blows would be to turn Jewry into a shapeless mass. There were moments of despair and complete prostration, when the approaching darkness threatened to obliterate all paths. This stage was followed by a period of mental haziness, marked by dim yearnings for regeneration, which were bound to remain fruitless because unaccompanied by organizing energy.

This transitional state of affairs lasted throughout the eighties and during the first half of the nineties. But by and by, out of the chaos of these nebulous social tendencies, there emerged more and more clearly the outlines of definite politico-national doctrines and organizations, and new paths were blazed which, leading in different directions, converged toward one goal—that of the regeneration of the Jewish people from within, both in its national and social life.

The turning-point of this process is marked by the year 1897. That year, in which the first International Zionist Congress held its sessions, inaugurated not only the political Zionist movement, but also the development of other currents of Jewish national and political thought. The entire gamut of public slogans rang through the air, all bearing testimony to one and the same fact: that the era of national penetration had come to an end, and that the vague longings for liberation and regeneration had assumed the character of a conscious endeavor pursuing a well-defined course. The careful observer could scarcely fail to perceive that beneath the hammer of history the formless mass of Jewry was being forged into a well-shaped instrument of great power. The organization of the Jewish people had taken its beginning.

Among the movements which arose at the end of the nineteenth century there were some which came to the surface of Jewish life rather suddenly, attracting the attention of the Jewish masses as well as that of the outside world. Others, however, were imbedded more deeply in the consciousness of the educated classes and were productive of a new outlook upon the national Jewish problem. The former were an answer to the question of the "Jewish misery," of *Die Judennot*, in its practical aspect. The latter offered a solution of the national-cultural problem of Judaism in its totality. The movements of the first kind are represented by Political Zionism and Territorialism. In the second category stand Spiritual Zionism and National-cultural Autonomism. On a parallel line with both varieties of the national movement, and frequently intersecting it, went the Jewish socialistic movement, tinged by a lesser or larger degree by nationalistic tendencies.



For fifteen years, the "Lovers of Zion," or the *Höbat Zion* movement, had been pursuing its course in Russia, without showing marked progress in the direction of that universal Jewish goal which had been formulated by its champions, Lilienblum and Pinsker.<sup>1</sup> During that period some fifteen Jewish agricultural colonies had sprung up in Palestine. The Jewish population of the Holy Land had been increased by some twenty thousand souls, and an effort had been made to create a national model school and to revive the ancient Hebrew tongue; but needless to say all this was far from solving the burning question of the six million Russian Jews who were clamoring for relief from their intolerable condition. At the slow rate of progress which had hitherto characterized the Jewish endeavors in Palestine any attempt to transfer a considerable portion of the Russian center to the Holy Land was doomed to failure, particularly in view of the hostility of the Turkish Government which was anxious to check even this insignificant growth of Jewish colonization.

At that juncture, the air of Europe resounded with the clarion tones of Theodor Herzl's appeal to the Jews to establish a "Jewish State." The appeal came from Western Europe, from the circles in which the sufferings of their "Eastern brethren" had hitherto been viewed entirely from the philanthropic point of view. It came from a young Viennese journalist who had been aroused by the orgy of anti-Semitism in the capital of Austria (the agitation of Burgomaster Lueger, and others), and by the exciting anti-Jewish scenes enacted in the capital of France, where, as a correspondent of the Viennese daily "*Die Neue Freie Presse*," he followed the Dreyfus affair

<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 232.

in its first early stages. Herzl became suddenly conscious of the acute pain of the Jewish misery. He saw the anti-Semitism of Western Europe closing ranks with the Judaphobia of Eastern Europe. He saw the ideal of assimilation crumbling in pieces, and he made up his mind to hoist the flag of Jewish nationalism, scarcely aware of the fact that it had already been hoisted in the East! His pamphlet ("The Jewish State"), which appeared in the beginning of 1896, was in its fundamental premises a repetition of the old appeal of Pinsker. The author of the new publication was convinced, like his predecessor, that the only relief from the Jewish misery lay in the concentration of the Jewish people upon a separate territory, without determining the question whether that territory should be Palestine or Argentina. But, in contradistinction to Pinsker, Herzl was not satisfied with formulating the problem theoretically; he offered at the same time a plan of political and economic organization by means of which the problem was to be solved: the creation of special representative bodies which were to enter into negotiations with rulers and Governments concerning the cession of an appropriate territory to the Jews under an international protocol, and were also to obtain the funds to carry out the transplantation and resettlement of our Jewish masses. Representing a combination of theory and the same aim and practical Utopia, the "Jewish State" of Herzl revived the nearly smothered political hopes which had been cherished by the *Hibate Zion* circles in Russia. The Russian Jews, groaning under the yoke of an Egyptian bondage,

After the publication of the *Judenstaat*, Herzl openly confessed that in the name of writers he did not know of the existence of Pinsker's "Autoemanzipation."

flocked to the new Moses who announced the glad tidings of the Exodus, and Herzl, beholding the ready hosts in the shape of the *Hobabs* Zion societies, was quick to adjust his territorialistic scheme to the existing Palestinian movement.

In this wise, the organization of political Zionism sprang into life, using as its medium of expression the international party congresses, most of which convened in Switzerland, in the city of Basle. The first Basle Congress held in August, 1897, was an impressive demonstration of the national awakening of the Jewish people. For the first time, the united representatives of Eastern and Western Jewry proclaimed before the world that the scattered sections of Jewry looked upon themselves as one national organism striving for national regeneration. From the center of Western assimilation, advocating the disappearance of Jewry, came the war-cry, proclaiming the continued existence of the Jewish nation, though that existence was conditioned by the establishment of a separate "publicly and legally assured" territorial center. Of the four articles of the "Basle program," which were adopted by the first Congress, three deal with the fundamental task of the party, the political and financial endeavors looking to the colonization of large Jewish masses in Palestine, and only one voices the need "of strengthening the Jewish national feeling and self-respect."

In the further progress of the Zionist organization, these two principles, the political and the cultural, were constantly struggling for mastery, the Zionists of the West gravitating toward political activities and diplomatic negotiations, while the Zionists of the East laid greater emphasis upon internal cultural work along national lines, looking upon it as an

indispensable prerequisite for national rebirth. The struggle between these two principles continued at each succeeding annual Congress (at the second and third held in Basle in 1898 and 1899, at the fourth in London in 1900, and at the fifth in Basle in 1901). On the one hand, the Zionists were feverishly engaged in the external organization of the movement: the consolidation of the *Sholel-payer* societies, the creation of the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Jewish National Fund, the conduct of diplomatic negotiations with the Turkish Government and with the political representatives of other countries for the purpose of obtaining a guaranteed "charter" for a wholesale colonization in Palestine. On the other hand, efforts were made to nationalize the Jewish intellectual class, to promote the Hebrew language, to create a national school, and "to conquer the communities" for Zionism, that is, to strengthen the influence of the party in the administration of the Jewish communities. The Convention of Russian Agents, held at Minsk in 1902, paid particular attention to the cultural aspirations of the party, and adopted a resolution calling for the appointment of two committees, an orthodox and a progressive, to find ways and means for placing Jewish education on a national basis. The same Convention demonstrated the growth of the movement, for, during the first five years of its existence, the Zionist organization in Russia had succeeded in securing about seventy thousand subscribers who were organized in approximately five hundred societies.

Yet the political and financial achievements of Zionism during that period of time—prior to the crisis of 1903—were insignificant. The diplomatic negotiations of the Zionist



leader, Dr. Theodor Herzl, with the Sultan of Turkey and his Government, as well as with the German emperor and several other European sovereigns, failed of their purpose—the obtaining of a Turkish charter for the wholesale colonization of Palestine. The financial instrument of the party, the Jewish Colonial Trust, proved as yet too weak to collect the proposed fund of ten million dollars—a modest sum when compared with the purpose for which it was destined. The colonization of Palestine proceeded at a slow pace, and its miniature scale was entirely out of proportion to the grand plan of establishing a national autonomous center in Palestine. Withal, Zionism proved during that brief interval a potent factor in the national awakening of Jewry. The strength of the movement lay, not in the political aims of the organization, which were mostly beyond reach, but in the very fact that tens of thousands of Jews were organized with a national end in view. It lay, moreover, in the current national-cultural activities, in the *Gegenwartsarbeit*, which, yielding to necessity, had been raised from a means to an end. In Western Europe, the principal significance of Zionism lay in its effect as a counter-balance to assimilation, Herzl having declared that “Zionism aims at the establishment of a publicly and legally assured home for those Jews who, in their present places of residence, are not able, or not willing, to assimilate themselves.” In Russia, however, where Jewish life was dominated by more powerful nationalizing influences, the chief importance of political Zionism lay in this very propaganda of a national rebirth in the midst of those whom militant Judaeophobia was endeavoring to reduce by intolerable oppression to the level of moral degenerates. The apathy and faint-heartedness which had charac-

terized public Jewish life during the eighties and the first half of the nineties was followed by a period of noisy bustle, of organizing activity, and of great animation. The Pale of Settlement resounded with the din of its hundreds of Zionist societies, with the speeches of Zionist agitators at public meetings and in the synagogues, with the intense agitation preceding the elections for each Zionist congress, with the heated debates about the program between the political and the cultural Zionists, between the Mizrahists (the faction of orthodox Zionists) and the Progressives. The public utterances of the Zionist leaders, Herzl and Nordau, were the subject of interminable discussion and comment. The Russian Jews were particularly stirred by the annual Congress addresses of Nordau on the "General Situation in Jewry," in which the famous writer pictured with characteristic vividness the tragedy of the *Golus*, the boundless extent of Jewish misery, having a material aspect in the lands of oppression and a moral aspect among the emancipated sections of Jewry, and which culminated in the thought that Jewry could not exist without Zion.

Nordau's motto, "Jewry will be Zionistic, or it will not be," was differently interpreted in the different circles of the Russian Jewish *intelligenza*. Among the Russian leaders of the party only a minority (Dr. Mandelstamm of Kiev, and others) were fully in accord with the extreme political views of the Western leaders. The majority of the former workers in the ranks of the *Hobebe Zion* movement (Ussishkin, Chlenov, and others) sought to harmonize the political functions of Zionism with its cultural aspirations and combine the diplomatic negotiations concerning a charter with the up-keep of the existing colonization work in Palestine, which latter was contemptuously

branded by the hide-bound adherents of political Zionism as "infiltration." This Babel of opinions within the ranks of the organization could not fail to weaken its effectiveness as an agency for the attainment of the ultimate Zionist goal. At the same time, it brought life and animation into the movement. The crack of the whip of the Egyptian taskmasters remained unheard amidst the clash of ideas and the proud slogans of national liberation which resounded throughout the Jewish Pale.

## 2. SPIRITUAL ZIONISM, OR AHAD-HA'AMISM

And yet, political Zionism viewed as a theory failed to offer a satisfactory solution of the great Jewish problem in all its historic complexity. Born of the reaction against anti-Semitism, and endeavoring to soothe the pain of the wounded Jewish heart, it was marked by all the merits and demerits of a theory which was substantially Messianic in character and was entirely dependent on subjective forces, on faith and will-power. "If you only will it, then it is no fairy tale"—in these words the ultimate goal of political Zionism is indicated by its founder, who firmly believed that an extraordinary exertion of the national will would transform the fairy tale of a "Jewish state" into reality. When confronted with the question as to the future of the Jewish nation in case faith and will-power should prove unable to grapple with the conditions over which it had no control, and the "fairy tale" of a united political autonomous center should not be realized, political Zionism either remained silent or indulged in a polemical retort which was

[The motto prefixed to Herzl's Zionist novel *Altneuland*]

in flagrant contradiction to Jewish history: "Without Zion, Judaism is bound to perish." The national conscience, however, could not be reconciled to such an answer. A more or less satisfactory solution of the problem of Judaism could not spring from the external reaction against anti-Semitism, but could only mature as the fruit of profound contemplation of the course of development pursued by the Jewish people in the Diaspora; such a solution could only be found in the endeavor to adapt the new national movement to this historic course. From this point of view political Zionism was rectified by "Spiritual Zionism," the teaching of the publicist and philosopher Abad Ha'am (U. Ginzberg).

Even before political Zionism, or "Herzlianism," appeared on the scene, Abad Ha'am had succeeded in substantially modifying the Palestinian idea as formulated by Lilienblum and Pinsker. In the program of the semi-Masonic order *Bnei Moshe* ("Sons of Moses"), established by him in Odessa,<sup>1</sup> he laid down the fundamental principle that the preparation of the land for the people must be preceded by the transformation of the people into a firmly united national organization: "We must propagate the national idea, and convert it into a lofty moral ideal." Having become associated with the Palestinian colonization in a practical manner, as a leading member of the Odessa Palestine Society, founded in 1890,<sup>2</sup> Abad Ha'am indefatigably preached that the significance of this microscopic colonization was not to be sought in its economic results, but in its spiritual and cultural effects, in establishing upon the historic soil of Judaism a nursing-ground for a pure national

<sup>1</sup> It was founded in 1889 and disbanded in 1897.

(<sup>2</sup> See vol. II, p. 431 *et seq.*)



culture which should be free from foreign admixture, and from the inevitable cultural eclecticism of the Diaspora. After the spectacular appearance of political Zionism on the Jewish stage this fundamental idea of "Neo-Palestinianism" was more fully elaborated by Ahad Ha'am, assuming the shape of a comprehensive doctrine, known as the doctrine of "Spiritual Zionism." When the first Basle Congress was over, Ahad Ha'am declared that the "Jewish State," as formulated by Herzl, was beyond realization, for the reason that, under the prevailing circumstances, it was entirely impossible to transfer to Palestine the whole Diaspora, or even a substantial part of it. Consequently, the Palestinian colonization could not put an end to the material "Jewish misery," whereas a small Jewish center, gradually rising in Palestine, might, with the help of a proper organization, solve the national-spiritual problem of Judaism. The formation of a spiritual center in the historic homeland of the nation, the creation in that center of a Jewish national school, the revival of the Hebrew language as a medium of daily speech, the untrammelled development of a Jewish culture, without the pressure of a foreign environment—such in short he held to be the true goal of the Palestine idea. A "publicly and legally assured home for the Jewish spirit" of this kind would exert an uninterrupted nationalizing influence upon the Diaspora, serving as a living center of attraction for a genuine Jewish culture, and acting like a focus which scatters its rays over a large periphery.

The Zionist doctrine of Ahad Ha'am, as a counterbalance to official Zionism which was hall-marked by the "Basle Program," led to interminable discussions among the partisans of the movement. It did not succeed in creating a separate party

or a special public agency for its realization, yet the elements of the doctrine have mingled in a larger or lesser degree with the rise of the political Zionists in Russia, and manifested themselves in the process of the cultural Zionists against the extreme political advocacy of the movement at the Zionist Congress. The Zionist Convention of Minsk, referred to previously, resulted in a partial triumph for the ideas espoused by Abad Ha'am, who submitted a report on the "Spiritual Degeneration of Judaism."<sup>1</sup> The Convention adopted a resolution calling for a larger measure of cultural work in the schedule of the party activities, but rejected at the same time the proposal of the referee to create a Jewish cultural organization for the revival of Jewish culture, on the ground that such an organization might destroy the political equilibrium of Zionism.

### 1. SPIRITUAL NATIONALISM, OR NATIONAL-CULTURAL AUTONOMY

Both cultural and spiritual Zionism have their roots in the same common ground, in "the negation of the *Chofes*," in the conviction that outside of Palestine—in the lands of the Diaspora—the Jewish people has no possibility of continuing its existence as a normal national entity. Both political and spiritual Zionists have their eyes equally fixed upon Zion as the anchor of safety for Judaism, whether it be in its material

<sup>1</sup> Abad Ha'am's report is embodied in the second volume of his collected essays (Hebrew, 1915) under the title *Yehudim be-Are'ot*, "Jews in Foreign Lands." An English version of this article is found in Leon Blum's translation of Abad Ha'am's essays (*Jewish Renaissance Society of America*, Philadelphia, 1912), p. 253 et seq.

or in its spiritual aspect. Neither doctrine had formulated a clear idea of the future destinies of the Jewish Diaspora, that is, of the destinies of the entire Jewry of the world, minus the section settled in Palestine. The political Zionists evaded the question as to the fate of the Jewish people in case their aspirations should not materialize, and, faithful to the motto proclaimed by Nordau, were ready, as it were, to sentence the entire Diaspora to death, or to a life worse than death, in the eventuality of the Palestine charter being refused. The cultural Zionists protested against this hypothetical Zionism, insisting that the Diaspora would preserve its national vitality by mere contact with a small cultural center in Palestine. But how the tremendous bulk of the Diaspora Jewry should be organized for a Jewish life on the spot, how it should be enabled to liberate itself from the political and cultural pressure of the environment—that question remained unanswered by both wings of Zionism. An answer to this question could not be found by considering merely the last stage of Jewish history, but by viewing the latter in all its phases, beginning with the ancient Greco-Roman and Eastern Diaspora. Such an answer, based upon the entire Jewish past, was attempted by the doctrine of "Spiritual Nationalism," or, more correctly, "National-Cultural Autonomism." Its fundamental principles have been formulated by the present writer in his "Letters Concerning Ancient and Modern Judaism."

[A number of articles under that title appeared originally in the Russian-Jewish monthly *Voskres*. They were subsequently enlarged and published in book form in 1907. The first two "Letters" were rendered into German by the translator of this volume and published in 1905 by the *Jüdischer Verlag* in Berlin, under the title *Die Grundlagen des Nationaljudentums*.]

The theory of Assimilationism takes as its point of departure the historic fact that at all times, with the exception of a few brief and partial deflections, the Jewish Diaspora, taken as a whole, represented a national organism in which the absence of political or territorial unity was made up by the stronger cohesion of its spiritual and cultural ties and the greater richness of its social and autonomous life. For many centuries the entire culture of Judaism assumed a religious coloring and its communal autonomy was centered in the synagogue—which circumstance gave the modern champions of assimilation reason for thinking that the Jews were only a religious group scattered among various nations. It was a fatal error on the part of the Parisian Synhedrion convoked by Napoleon when, in its Declaration of 1807, it proclaimed that "Jewry today does not constitute a nation," an error which during the nineteenth century became an article of faith with the Jews of Western Europe. The latest development of the national movement has shown that Jewry, though scattered among various political states, is a nation full of vitality, and that the Jewish religion is only one of its functions. The Jewish national idea, secularized to a certain degree, is based on the assumption that all sections of the Jewish people, though divided in their political allegiance, form one spiritual or transcultural nation, which, like all national minority groups in countries with a mixed population, are to strive to end to fight in their several lands at one and the same time not only for their civil equality, but also for their national rights—the autonomy of the Jewish community, school, and language. What Jewish orthodoxy has for centuries stood for and still stands for, under the guise of religious



Judaism, progressive Jews should fight for under the banner of a national Jewish culture. The fate of universal Jewry ought not to be bound up with one single center. We should take into account the historic fact of a multiplicity of centers of which those that have the largest numbers and can boast of the most genuine development of a national Jewish life are entitled to the hegemony of the Jewish people. In those lands in which civil emancipation has been achieved the fight must go on for national emancipation, the recognition of the Jews as a nation which is entitled to a comprehensive communal and cultural autonomy. In Russia, the struggle must be carried on simultaneously for civil as well as national rights. Temporary set-backs in this struggle for a national existence ought not to discourage a nation which has endured the most terrible sufferings for centuries and has been able to preserve its spiritual freedom even in the midst of slavery.

A certain measure of relief from these sufferings might be found in the old-time remedy of Jewish history, in the emigration from the lands of bondage to countries enjoying a greater amount of freedom. If in one of the centers the Jews are subject to prolonged persecution, then their gradual transplantation, be it partial or complete, to another center offering more favorable opportunities in the struggle for existence ought to be attempted. Thus, during the last decades, the partial exodus of the Jews from Russia has helped to create an important Jewish center in North America and a smaller, yet spiritually valuable center, in Palestine. The latter may become a medium for the nationalization of the entire Diaspora, but only then when the Diaspora itself will be organized directly upon the foundations of a cultural autonomy. Zion-

ing, when, reduced to its concrete possibilities, can form only one peak in the universal platform of the Jewish nation. The Palestinian center may strengthen the national development of the Diaspora, but it does not constitute a condition *per se* for its autonomous existence.

Similar to Spiritual Zionism which had not consented to forming a special party, and yet acted as a lever to the general Zionist movement, Antisemitism, too, failed to find its embodiment in a party organization, and yet became an integral part of the political-national movements of Russian Jews at the beginning of the present century. During the revolutionary struggle in Russia, in 1905 and 1906, the demand for a national-cultural autonomy was embodied in various degrees by nearly all Jewish parties and groups in their platforms, aside from, and in addition to, the demand for civil equality.

#### 4. THE JEWISH SOCIALISTIC MOVEMENT

On a parallel line with the nationalistic ideology, which formed a counterbalance to the assimilationist theory of Western Europe, the doctrine of Socialism came gradually to the fore, emphasizing the principle of the class struggle in a more or less intimate connection with the national idea. The Jewish labor movement was born at the end of the eighties in Lithuania—in Vilna, and other cities; its adherents were recruited from among the Jewish workmen who were mainly engaged in handicrafts. In the nineties, the movement spread to the growing manufacturing centers of Lithuania and Poland—Mławy, Łódź, Suwałki, Warsaw, and Lask. At first the labor societies were established with a purely economic end in view—

<sup>1</sup> See later, p. 139 et seq.

the organization of strikes for fewer working hours, increased wages, and the like. The leaders of these societies who were recruited from among the young Jewish intelligentsia, some of whom had received a university education abroad, endeavored to model the movement upon the pattern of the West-European Social Democracy. The doctrine of Marxian Socialism was applied, sometimes rather hastily, to the primitive stage of capitalistic production in the Pale of Settlement where it was still very difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the poverty-stricken "petty bourgeoisie," forming the bulk of the Jewish population, and the labor proletariat.

In the second half of the nineteenth, the Jewish Socialistic societies were drawn into the maelstrom of the Russian revolutionary movement. In 1897, all these societies were consolidated in the "League of the Jewish Workingmen of Lithuania, Poland, and Russia," known under its abbreviated name as *Der Bund* ("The League"). The first secret convention of the "League" took place in Vilna in the month of September, just one month after the first Zionist Congress at Basle. Various party centers were organized in Russia—clandestinely, of course; the party organ, published in the language of the Jewish masses, in Yiddish, appeared abroad under the name of *Die Arbeiter Stimme*. It is worthy of note that the formation of the Jewish "Bund" gave a year later the stimulus to the organization of the "Russian Social-Democratic Party," which united the formerly existing Russian labor societies. The "Bund" now joined the ranks of Russian Social Democracy as a separate autonomous group, although a number of Jewish Social Democrats who had adopted the

concept of assimilation or cosmopolitanism occupied a conspicuous place in the leadership of the Russian party at large.

At subsequent conventions the "Bund" endeavored to articulate its national problem. At first, the tendency prevailed to limit the national element in the party platform to the use of the popular Jewish vernacular as a propaganda medium among the masses. At the third convention of the "Bund," which took place in Krynau in 1907, the proposal to demand national equality for the Jews was voted down on the ground that the attention of the workmen should be concentrated upon their class interests and ought not to be diverted to the direction of national aspirations. The fourth convention of the party, held in 1901, similarly declared "that it was premature, under the present circumstances, to put forward the demand for a national autonomy for the Jews." Although it realized at the same time that "the concept of nationality is also applicable to the Jewish people." Only after prolonged debate in the party press, and after a violent struggle with the centralizing tendencies of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, the convention of the "Bund," held in 1908, adopted a resolution, demanding "national-cultural autonomy" in the domain of popular education as well as public rights for the language spoken by the Jews.

In this wise, the national element gradually permeated even the doctrine of Socialism, which, in its essence, had always been opposed to it and had placed in its stead the principle of internationalism and class interests. On the other hand, an attempt was made to inject the Socialistic element into Zionism. Beginning with 1901 the *Poale-Zion* ("The Zionist Workmen") began to organize themselves in separate



societies which proclaimed the territorial principle of Zionism as the only means of solving the Jewish social-economic question, proceeding from the assumption that in the lands of the Diaspora the Jewish masses would always be barred from the domain of big industry.

#### 5. THE REVIVAL OF JEWISH LETTERS

This national revival of Russian Jewry found its expression also in Jewish literature. The periodical press, particularly in the Hebrew language, exhibited new life and vigor, and in other domains of literary productivity various big talents made their appearance. As early as the end of the eighties, the two weekly Hebrew organs, the *ha-Melitz* in St Petersburg, and the *ha-Tzefirah* in Warsaw, were transformed into dailies. The Hebrew annuals pursuing purely literary and scientific aims, such as the *ha-Asif* ("The Harvest"), *Keneset Israel* ("The Community of Israel"), *Pardes* ("The Garden"), and others, made way for the more energetic *ha-Shiloah*, a monthly publication which reacted more rapidly on the questions of the day.<sup>1</sup> This review, which is the equal of the leading periodicals of Europe, exercised considerable influence upon the views of the nationalist Jewish youth during the period of transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

At one and the same time, considerable headway was made by the periodical press in the popular vernacular, called Jargon, or Yiddish. The *Jüdisches Volksblatt*, a weekly publica-

<sup>1</sup> The *ha-Shiloah* was edited from 1896 to 1902 by Ahad Ha'am in Odessa, though it was published in Berlin. Beginning with 1903, it was edited by Dr. Joseph Klausner, also in Odessa.

ism appeared in St. Petersburg from 1881 to 1890. The *Hauptstadt*, the *Jüdische Volksblätter*, the *Jüdische Arbeiter*, edited by Spertler, Shalom Altschorn, and I. L. Peres, respectively, were published in Warsaw and Kiev between 1888 and 1895. *Der Jod*, a Yiddish weekly, was issued in Warsaw in 1895, 1903.

As for the Jewish press in the Russian language, the former newspaper of the progressive intelligentsia, the *Vneshok*, which appeared at the same time as a weekly and as a monthly publication, leaned more and more towards the national movement. Another Russian Jewish weekly, *Russisch-Juden*, "The Jew," which appeared in St. Petersburg from 1899 to 1903, was devoted to tendentiousness.

In the theoretical branch of publicistic literature the dominant figure during that period was Ahad Ha'am, whose articles addressed to answer not only the exalting questions of the day but also the perpetual problems of Judaism. His brief manifesto, semi-publicistic essays, under the general heading *Pe'amot* ("Tithing"), served as a bye star for those who hoped to find the synthesis of "Jew" and "man" in modern Jewish nationalism. In a series of articles he lashes "slavery to freedom,"<sup>1</sup> or the assimilation of the emancipated Jews of Western Europe; he criticizes the theory of "Nationalism without Zion,"<sup>2</sup> and the manifestations of a Jewish Nietzscheanism with its denial of the Jewish ethical doctrine. Not satisfied with mere criticism, he formulates in these articles the principles of a "spiritual revival"<sup>3</sup> in the sense of a

[<sup>1</sup> *Slavery to free Israel*, the title of one of these articles.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Pe'amot* No. 7, 1900, the title of another article, based upon his report at the Zionist Convention at Minsk. See above, p. 51.]

nationalization of Jewish culture. The essays of Ahad Ha'am, which were subsequently collected under the title '*Al Parashat Derakim*, "At the Parting of the Ways,"' represent a profound and closely reasoned system of thought which is firmly grounded in historico-philosophical premises.

In the forefront of publicists of a less theoretic turn of mind stood the talented Nahum Sokolow, the editor of the *Ha-Tsephrah* in Warsaw, who, after some vacillation, joined the ranks of political Zionism. In the border-land between journalism and literary criticism the most conspicuous figures were David Frischman and Micah Joseph Berdychewsky. The former emphasized in his brilliant literary essays the necessity of a "Europeanization" of Judaism, while the latter championed the cause of Nietzscheanism, protesting against the suppression of the "man" in the "Jew," and against the predominance of the spiritual over the material in the doctrine of Judaism. Berdychewsky is also the author of a number of sketches portraying the tragic split in the soul of the Jewish intellectual and the primitive harmoniousness of the old Hasidic world.

In the realm of Jewish *belles lettres* S. J. Abramovich, known under his pen-name *Mendele Mokher Sforim*, the writer of the "Era of Reforms," remained as theretofore the acknowledged leader. The creative energy of this author, who mastered with equal skill both the national and the popular language,

\*The first three volumes appeared in 1895-1904. [The fourth volume appeared in 1913. A German rendering of Ahad Ha'am's selected essays by the translator of the present volume was published in Berlin in 1904; a second enlarged edition appeared in 1912. An English translation by Leop. Simon was issued by the Jewish Publication Society of America in 1912.]

attained to even greater heights during the period of the new Jewish martyrdom. His novel *Wan-shpigel*, "The Wishing Ring," which was originally written in Yiddish, and, in its Hebrew version, grew into a large volume, *Be'Emek ha Ezer*, "In the Valley of Tears" (1897-1907), constitutes a great epic depicting Jewish life during the gloomy reign of Nicholas I. and the "Era of Enlightenment" under Alexander II. A series of sketches, marked by inimitable humor, portray the disintegration of the old mode of life under the influence of the pogroms of 1881 and the subsequent emigration from Russia (*Hama ha Re'asa*, "In Stormy Days," and others). His autobiographical series, *Hayyim ben Hayyim*, "In Three Days," and his incomplete *Salomon Reb Hayyim* ("Salomon the son of Hayyim") reveal the power of rare psychological analysis.

Abramovich's literary activity, extending over half a century, earned for him the title of "Grandfather of Non-Hebrew Literature" (*Aber Zelde*).<sup>1</sup> He was privileged to witness the brilliant successes of his "sons and grandsons" who came gradually to the fore, particularly in Yiddish literature. His younger contemporary, Isaac Leib Peres, wrote, during the first period of his literary endeavors, clever stories, portraying the life of the Jewish masses in Poland and distinguished by a powerful realism, often tinged with satire (his series *Reise-bilder*, "Travel Pictures," and other sketches which were written mostly during the nineties). Later on, Peres leaned more and more towards modern literary symbolism, drawing

<sup>1</sup> He died, after the completion of the present volume by the author, on December 15, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> The Yiddish equivalent for "Grandfather."



his inspiration mostly from the mystic legends of the Hasidim (his series *Hasidish*, which was subsequently expanded into two volumes under the title *Volkstümliche Geschichten*, "Popular Stories," 1909).<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of the century, the talent of the great Jewish humorist Shalom Aleichem (S. Rabinovitz)<sup>2</sup> attained its full bloom. He was particularly successful in his masterly delineation of the *Luftmensch* type of the Pale of Settlement, who is constantly on the hunt for a piece of bread, who clutches at every possible profession and subsists on illusions (his sketches *Menahem Mendel*). Using the popular vernacular with its characteristic idioms and witticisms as his vehicle of expression, Shalom Aleichem draws the pictures of the "Little People" of the Russian ghetto (his series *Kleine Menshelekh*), describes the joys and sorrows of their children (*Maassios far Jüdishe Kinder*, "Stories for Jewish Children"), and puts into the mouth of the unsophisticated philosopher of the ghetto, "Tevye (Tobias) the Dairyman," the soul-stirring epic of the great upheavals in this secluded little world (the series of sketches under the name *Tevye Der Milchiger*). To these big stars on the sky of Jewish *belles-lettres* may be added the host of lesser luminaries who write in the rejuvenated ancient language of the nation or in the vernacular of the masses, the Yiddish.

The literary revival manifested itself with particular vigor in the domain of poetry. At the beginning of the nineties, the

[<sup>1</sup> A collection of his sketches, translated into English by Helena Frank, was issued by the Jewish Publication Society of America in 1906.]

[<sup>2</sup> Died in New York on May 13, 1916.]

voice of Judah Leib Gordon, the poet of the "Era of Reforms" was silenced (he died in 1892). The singer of the national sorrow, Simon Frug,<sup>1</sup> who was carried away by the new ideas of Zionism, began to sing his "Zionids" in the Russian language, writing at the same time for the masses sonorous poems in Yiddish, though neither of them reveals the poetic charm of his older national elegies.

New stars now glisten on the horizon. The middle of the nineties saw the ripening of the mighty talent of Hayyim Nahman Bialik, who brought the poetical forms of ancient Hebrew speech to unprecedented perfection. The magnificence of form is matched by the wealth of content. The greatest creative power of Bialik is displayed in his treatment of national *motifs*. Himself the product of the rabbinical Yeshibah and Bet ha-Midrash, he sings of the spiritual beauty hidden behind these ancient and outwardly unattractive walls, in this antiquated citadel of the Jewish spirit, where the cult of intellectual knighthood reigned supreme, where the spiritual shield was forged which preserved a nation of lambs amidst a horde of wolves (his wonderful poems *Im Yesh Et Nafsheka la-Da'at*,<sup>2</sup> *ha-Matmid*, "the Diligent Student," and others). The sufferings and humiliations heaped upon his people by its enemies bring the poet to the brink of despair, for he realizes that the old shield has been laid aside, and no new shield has taken its place. He is filled with indignation at the indifference of the Jewish masses to the appeal for

[<sup>1</sup> See vol II, p. 228 *et seq.*]

[<sup>2</sup> See vol. II, p. 330, n. 1.]

[<sup>3</sup> "If thou wishes to know the fountain—whence thy martyred brethren drew their inspiration."]

regeneration sounded by Zionism (*Aken Hatsir An'Am*, "Verily, the People are like Grass," and others). At a later stage, beginning with the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, Bialik's lyre becomes more and more pessimistic, adopting the tone of wrathful rebuke and fiery denunciation.

In contra-distinction to this singer of the national soul, another contemporary poet, Saul Chernikhovsky, sounds the keynote of general human experience and the joy of living. He demonstratively prostrates himself before the statue of Apollo (*Lenokah Pesel Apollo*, "Before the Statue of Apollo"), offering to it the repentant prayer of the Jew for having denied the ideal of beauty. He raves about "Hellenism," the cult of joy and light, repudiating the one-sided spirituality and rigorism of old Judaism. Erotic motifs, descriptions of nature, ballads, rustic idylls—such are the characteristic features of Chernikhovsky's poetry which forms, as it were, a general human pendant to the poetry of Bialik, though yielding to it in the depth of literary conception. Both Bialik and Chernikhovsky fructified the field of Jewish poetry, which in the beginning of the twentieth century found a whole host of more or less talented cultivators, most of them writing in the ancient national language, though in a rejuvenated form.

Less rapid was the progress of Jewish scholarly endeavors. Yet, beginning with the eighties, even this domain is marked by an uninterrupted activity which forms a continuation of the scientific achievements of the West. The nineties inaugurate systematic efforts directed toward the elucidation of the history of the Jews in Russia and Poland. A series of scholarly researches, monographs, and general accounts of Jew-

ish history, written mostly in Russian, make their appearance. Particularly noteworthy are the efforts to blaze new paths of Jewish historiography converging towards the national conception of Judaism. The Jewish historians of the nineteenth century in Western Europe, who were swayed by assimilationist ideas, viewed Jewish history primarily from the theological or spiritualistic point of view. The scholarly endeavors of Russian Jewry constitute an attempt to understand the social development of the Diaspora as a peculiar, internally-autonomous nation which, at all times, has sought to preserve not only its religious treasures, but also the genuine complexion of its diversified national life.



## CHAPTER XXXIII THE KISHINEV MASSACRE

### 1. POORHOMS AS A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY MEASURE

The frenzy of political reaction, which raged for two decades, was grist to the mill of the Revolution. Stunned by the blow it had received at the beginning of the eighties, the Russian revolutionary movement came back to consciousness at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the hopes for a change of policy on the part of Nicholas II. had been completely blasted. The agitation among the students and the workingmen, the "disorders" at the universities, the strikes at the factories, the revolutionary propaganda carried on in the underground press at home and in the public press abroad—all these endeavors were gradually co-ordinated within the frame of the two revolutionary organizations, the Social-Democratic and the Social-Revolutionary parties, both of which assumed definite shape between 1898 and 1900. The Social-Revolutionary party favored terrorism as a weapon in its struggle with the Russian Government, which had made use of all the appliances of police terrorism to suppress the faintest stirring for liberty. This official terrorism raged with unrestricted violence. Nocturnal raids, arrests, prisons, and places of deportation or of penal servitude, filled to overflowing with "political criminals," mostly young men and women—such were the agencies by means of which the Government hoped to stamp out the "revolutionary hydra," even when manifesting itself in the form of moderate constitutional demands. The revolutionaries fought terrorism with terrorism, and one of their victims was the reactionary Minister of the Interior, Sipyagin, who was

assassinated in April, 1902. The disaffected Tsar returned to appealing to the same *Alte von Platte*, one of the most renowned benchmen of the Russian political inquisition, who had long before, in his capacity of Chief of the Political *Okla*, brought its mechanism to the top notch of efficiency. It was destined to play an ill-fated rôle in the martyrology of Russian Jewry.

It was easily to be foreseen that the Russian revolutionary movement would make a strong appeal to the Russian Jewish youth. Had any other cultured nation been tormented and mutilated as cruelly and as systematically as were the Jews in Russia it would surely have given birth to an immense host of desperate terrorists. True, the Jews supplied the revolutionary army with a larger number of fighters than was warranted by their numerical proportion to the rest of the Russian population. Yet their number was insignificant when compared with the atrocities which were constantly perpetrated against them. As a rule, the Jewish college youth joined the ranks of the Social-Democratic organization, which disapproved of political assassination. There were particularly many sons of Marxists among the Jewish young men and women who had been turned away from the Russian institutions of learning and had gone to Western Europe where they imbibed the doctrines and methods of German Social Democracy. There were fewer Jews among the Social Revolutionaries (Germans, Czechs, and others), and these, too, did not as a rule take a direct part in the terrorist plots. As a matter of fact, the only terrorist act committed by a Jew was that of the workman Hirsch Leckert, in Vilna. Stung by the

barbarous conduct of the governor of Vilna, von Wahl, who had given orders to flog the Jewish workingmen in public for having arranged a demonstration on May 1, 1902, Lekkert fired upon that official. The governor escaped unscathed, and Lekkert paid with his life for the attempt. But on the whole, the revolutionary activity of the Jews was limited to the frequent political demonstrations arranged by the "Bund," and to the organizing endeavors of a certain section of the Jewish intellectuals who had joined the ranks of both Russian Socialistic parties.

Had the Russian Government been guided by a genuine interest in the body politic, the spread of the revolutionary movement among the Jews, which was the child of its own system of oppression, would have inevitably induced it to mitigate a system which was bound to turn millions of people into desperadoes. But the Russian Government was, properly speaking, not a Government. It was a caste of officials who had degraded the administration of the country to the systematic endeavor of saving their own personal careers and class interests, both of which were indissolubly bound up with unlimited autocracy. The Russian bureaucracy regarded the revolution as a personal threat, as a menace to its existence, and looked upon the Jewish participants in the revolution as their own individual enemies whose deeds were to be avenged upon the whole Jewish people. Thus there ripened in the mind of Plehve, the head of the bureaucratic inquisition, a truly devilish plan: to wage war against the Russian revolution by waging war against the Jews, and to divert the attention of the Russian public, which was honeycombed with the revolutionary propaganda, in the direction of the "aliens."

thereby stigmatizing the entire emancipatory movement in Russia as "the work of Jewish hands," as an anti-patriotic cause which was foreign to the Russian people. It was part of this plan to engineer somewhere a barbarous anti-Jewish pogrom in order to intimidate the Jewish revolutionaries and to put it forward as a protest of the "Russian people" against the "Jewish revolution." "Drown the revolution in Jewish blood!"—this motto underlay the terrible scheme which, beginning with 1903, was put into execution by the underlings of Nicholas II. at the most crucial moments in the Russian revolutionary movement.

## 2. THE ORGANIZED KISHINEV BUTCHERY

Needless to say, there was plenty of inflammable material for such an anti-Jewish conflagration. One of the criminal haunts of these incendiaries was situated at that time in Kishinev, the capital of semi-Moldavian Bessarabia. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the fifty thousand Jews of that city had lived in peace and harmony with their Christian neighbors who numbered some sixty thousand. At the beginning of the new century, these friendly relations were severed, owing to the untrammelled anti-Semitic agitation of a local yellow journalist, a petty official by the name of Krushevan. This official had been publishing in Kishinev since 1897 a local sheet under the name of *Bessarabetz* ("The Bessarabian"). Having originally embarked upon a moderately progressive policy, the paper soon sold itself to the local anti-Semitic reactionaries from among the nobility and bureaucracy, and was thenceforth subventioned by the Government. For a number of years Krushevan's paper carried on an unbridled



agitation against the Jews. The Jews were accused of every possible crime, of economic "exploitation," of Socialism, of "hatred towards the Christians," of ritual murders, and of fathering the "Godless revolution." Favored by the powers that be, the *Bessarabetz* could do what it pleased. The censorship of the paper lay in the hands of the deputy-governor of Kishinev, Ustrugov, who during his administrative activity had proved himself a past master in the art of persecuting the Jews and curtailing the crumbs of rights that were still left to them. Under the auspices of such a censor, who was in reality a contributor to the paper, the latter was sure of immunity even when it proceeded to print appeals calling on the Christian population to make pogroms upon the Jews.

This agitation was particularly dangerous in view of the fact that the *Bessarabetz* was the only press organ in the province, the Government consistently refusing to license the publication of any other newspaper. As a matter of fact, Krushevan's activity in Bessarabia was so well thought of by Plehve that in 1902 the mercenary journalist received considerable sums from a special slush fund for the publication of a newspaper in St. Petersburg, under the name *Znamya* ("The Banner"), with a similarly reactionary anti-Semitic tendency. However, in the capital, the filthy sheet was unable to find readers. But as far as the *Bessarabetz* was concerned, its influence was clearly felt. Russian public opinion was affected by the poisonous doses administered to it daily. The sinister instincts of the mob became inflamed more and more, and there was the foreboding of a storm in the air.

In the beginning of 1903, Krushevan found an occasion to give a definite turn to his accustomed pogrom propaganda. In the town of Dubossary the mutilated body of a Russian

peasant boy, Rybalenko, had been found, who, as was subsequently brought out by the judicial inquiry, had been slain by his uncle in the hope of appropriating his portion of a bequest. The *Bessarabetz* immediately launched a campaign against the Jews, accusing them of ritual murder. "Death to the Jews! Let all Zhyds be massacred!"—such appeals were almost daily repeated in the paper which was read in all the saloons and public-houses of Bessarabia. The unenlightened Russian mob itched for an occasion to lay its hands upon the Jews. An attempt at a pogrom was made at Dubossary, but it was frustrated by the local Jews who were of a sturdy physique.

On the eve of the Easter festival of 1903, mysterious rumors were set afloat in Kishinev itself telling of the murder of a Christian servant girl, whose death was ascribed to the Jews. In reality the girl had taken poison and died, despite the efforts of her Jewish master to save her life. The goings-on in Kishinev on the eve of that Easter bore the earmarks of an energetic activity on the part of some secret organization which was hatching an elaborate fiendish scheme. That criminal organization was centered in the local Russian club which was the rallying-point of the officials of the province. Shortly before the holiday, there suddenly appeared in the city an emissary of the political police, the gendarmerie officer Levendahl, who had been despatched from St. Petersburg; after Easter, when the sanguinary crime had already been committed, the same mysterious envoy vanished just as suddenly.

The triumvirate Krushevan-Ustrugov-Levendahl was evidently the soul of the terrible anti-Semitic conspiracy. Printed hand-bills were scattered about in the city, telling the

people that an imperial ukase had been published, granting permission to inflict a "bloody punishment" upon the Jews in the course of the three days of the Christian Passover. The police made no attempt to suppress these circulars, for, as was subsequently brought out, they were in the conspiracy. Several police officials even hinted at the impending events in their talks with Jewish acquaintances. In the saloons and in the tea-houses, the approaching pogrom was the subject of public discussion. The Jews were fully aware of the coming storm, though they scarcely realized that it would take the form not merely of an ordinary pogrom, but of a regular butchery. On the eve of the festival of Passover, the representatives of the Jewish community waited upon the governor and the Chief of Police, praying for protection, and received the cool reply that the necessary instructions had already been given and that the proper measures for their safety had been adopted. The local Greek-Orthodox bishop asked the rabbi, who came to see him on the subject, whether it was true that there was a Jewish sect which used Christian blood for ritual purposes.

The conflagration which was openly prepared by the incendiaries broke out at the moment determined upon. On Sunday, April 6, the first day of the Christian Passover and the seventh day of the Jewish holiday, the church bells began to ring at noontime, and a large crowd of Russian burghers and artisans, acting undoubtedly upon a given signal scattered all over the town, and fell upon the Jewish houses and stores. The bands were preceded by street urchins who were throwing stones at the windows. The rioters, whose number was swelled by these youthful "fighters," seeing that the police

made no attempt to interfere, began to break into the houses and stores, and to throw the contents on the street where everything was destroyed or plundered by the festive crowd. But even then the police and soldier detachments who were stationed on the streets remained passive, and made no attempt to arrest the rioters. This attitude served in the eyes of the mob as a final proof that the rumors concerning the permission of the Tzar "to beat the Jews" were correct. An immense riff-raff, in a state of intoxication, crowded the streets, shouting "Death to the Zhyds! Beat the Zhyds!"

In the evening looting gave way to killing. The murderers, armed with clubs and knives, assailed the Jews in the cars, on the streets, and in the houses, wounding them severely, sometimes even fatally. Even then, the police and military remained inactive; only when in one place a group of Jews, armed with sticks, attempted to drive off the murderers, the police stepped in at once and disarmed the defenders.

At ten o'clock in the evening the looting and killing were suddenly stopped. Rumor had it that the general staff of the rioters were holding a meeting concerning the further plan of military operations, and were making arrangements for a systematic butchery. The "army" soon received the necessary orders, and in the course of the entire day of April 7, from daybreak until eight o'clock in the evening, Kishinev was the scene of bestialities such as find few parallels even in the history of the most barbarous ages. Finding themselves defenceless and exposed to the passions of a savage crowd, many Jewish families hid themselves in their cellars, or in their garrets, and sometimes sought safety in the houses of their Christian neighbors, but the murderers succeeded in



hunting down their unfortunate victims. The Jews were slain in most barbarous fashion. Many of them were not killed at once, but were left writhing in pre-mortal agonies. Some had nails driven into their heads or had their eyes put out. Little children were thrown from garrets to the pavement, and their brains dashed out upon the stones. Women had their stomachs ripped open or their breasts cut off. Many of them became the victims of rape. One gymnazium pupil who saw his mother attacked by these fiends threw himself single-handed upon them, and saved at the cost of his life his mother's honor; he himself was slain, and his mother's eyes were put out. The drunken hordes broke into the synagogue, and, getting hold of the Torah scrolls, tore them to shreds, defiled them, and trampled upon them. In one synagogue, the old *Shammes* (beadle), arrayed in his prayer-shawl, and shielding with his body the Ark containing the sacred scrolls, was savagely murdered by the desecrators on the threshold of the sanctuary.

Throughout the entire day, wagons were seen moving in the streets, carrying wounded and slain Jews to the hospitals which had been converted into field-lazarettes.

But even this sight did not induce the police to step in. The Russian population, outside of a few isolated cases, made no attempt to defend the tormented Jews. The so-called "intelligent" public, the officials with their wives and children, the students, the lawyers, the physicians, walked leisurely upon the streets and looked on indifferently, and sometimes even sympathetically, while the terrible "work" was going on. The governor of Bessarabia, von Raaben, who, on the morning of the second day of the pogrom, was waited upon by a Jewish

deputation begging for protection, replied that he could do nothing since he had received no instructions from St. Petersburg.

At last at five o'clock in the afternoon, a telegram was received from Plesne, and at six o'clock large detachments of troops, fully armed, appeared on the central streets. No sooner had the crowd noticed that the soldiers were ready to act than it took to its heels, without a single shot being fired. Only in the outskirts of the town, which had not yet been reached by the troops, the plunder and massacre continued until late in the evening.

It is needless to point out that had this readiness of the police and military to attend to their duty been displayed in Kishinev at the inception of the pogrom, not a single Jew would have been murdered nor a single house destroyed. As it was, the murderers and rioters were given a free hand for two days, and the result was that forty-five Jews were slain, eighty-six severely wounded or crippled, five hundred slightly wounded, apart from cases of rape, the number of which could not be determined. Fifteen hundred houses and stores were demolished and looted. The victims were mostly among the lower classes of the Jewish population, since many well-to-do Jewish families were able, by bribing the police heavily, to secure the protection of the latter and to have the rioters turned away from their houses. As against the enormous number of Jewish victims, there were only two fatalities among the instigated rioters. The Kishinev Jews seemed unable to resist the murderers and sell their lives dearly.

## 3. ECHOES OF THE KISHINEV TRAGEDY

A cry of horror rang throughout Russia and the more or less civilized countries of the world when the news of the Kishinev butchery became known. The entire liberal Russian press voiced its indignation against the Kishinev atrocities. The most prominent Russian writers expressed their sympathy with the victims in letters and telegrams. Leo Tolstoy voiced his sentiments in a letter which could not be published on account of the censorship.<sup>1</sup> The humanitarian writer Korolenko portrayed the horrors of Kishinev in a heart-rending story under the title "House No. 13," in which, on the basis of personal observation, he pictured how the Jewish residents of one house were tortured to death by the rioters. The story was circulated in an illegal edition, its publication having

<sup>1</sup> The following extract may show that the great writer had a profound insight into the causes of the Kishinev barbarities.

"My opinion concerning the Kishinev crime is the result also of my religious convictions. Upon the receipt of the first news which was published in the papers, not yet knowing all the appalling details which were communicated subsequently, I fully realized the horror of what had taken place and experienced simultaneously a burning feeling of pity for the innocent victims of the cruelty of the populace, amazement at the bestiality of all these so-called Christians, revulsion at all these so-called cultured people who instigated the mob and sympathized with its actions. But I felt a particular horror for the principal culprit, our Government with its clergy which fosters in the people bestial sentiments and fanaticism with its horde of murderous officials. The crime committed at Kishinev is nothing but a direct consequence of that propaganda of falsehood and violence which is conducted by the Russian Government with such energy. The attitude adopted by the Russian Government in relation to this question may only serve as a new proof of the class egotism of this Government, which stops at no cruelty whenever it finds it necessary to check movements that are deemed dangerous by it. Like the Turkish Government at the time of the Armenian massacres, it remains entirely indifferent to the most horrible acts of cruelty, as long as these acts do not affect its interests."

been strictly forbidden by the censor. But in Russia itself, the cry was stifled by the heavy hand of Plehve's censorship, and whenever a fraction of the terrible truth managed to slip through the barriers of the censor, Plehve sent out warnings to the papers threatening to discontinue their publication for the "pursuit of an injurious policy." Such a fate actually overtook the Russian Jewish *Vozhok*, in St. Petersburg, the legal journal *Pravo* ("The Law"), and others. The entire Russian press was forced by the Government to publish the falsified version embodied in its official reports, in which the organized massacre was toned down to a casual brawl, and the enormity of the troops was explained either by the inadequacy of their numbers—despite the fact that several battalions were stationed in the city—or by the incapacity of the police, while the dead and wounded were referred to in a vague manner so as to suggest that the victims of the "brawl" were to be found on both sides.

But the revelations in the foreign press were of a nature to stagger all Europe and America. The correspondent of the London *Times* published the text of a secret letter addressed by Plehve to the governor of Bessarabia, in which, two weeks before the pogrom, the latter official was told that, in the case of anti-Jewish "disorders," "no recourse shall be taken to armed interference with the urban population, so as not to arouse hostility to the Government in a population which has not yet been affected by the revolutionary propaganda." The authenticity of this letter is not entirely beyond suspicion. But there can be no doubt that instructions to that effect, rather by word of mouth than in writing, probably through the secret agent Leventahl, had been actually transmitted to the authorities in Kishinev.



From the fact that on the second day of the pogrom the governor was still waiting for instructions from St. Petersburg permitting him to discontinue the massacre it is evident that he must have received previous orders to allow it to proceed up to a certain point. The horrors of the Armenian massacres in Turkey, against which even Russian diplomacy had protested more than once, faded into insignificance before the wholesale butchery at Kishinev. Europe and America were deeply agitated. The Jews outside of Russia collected large funds for their unhappy Russian brethren, but their efforts exhausted themselves in sympathy and philanthropy.

The effect of the catastrophe upon Russian Jewry was more lasting. A mixed feeling of wrath and shame seized the Jewish public—wrath against the organizers and abettors of the terrible crime, and shame for the tortured and degraded brethren who, not having a chance to save their lives, had failed to save their honor by offering stout resistance to these beasts in human shape, who were sure of immunity. The poet Frug poured forth his sentiments in a Yiddish poem, voicing his sorrow at the physical helplessness of his nation and confining himself to an appeal to the kind Jewish heart: Too keen and grievous is our pain, too weak our hand the blow to parry.

Come on, then, tender Jewish heart, and love and comfort to us carry !

Brothers, sisters, pray, have pity; dire and dreadful is our need: Shrouds we want the dead to bury, and bread that the living we may feed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Schlaff is unser Hand zu streiten, stark un schwer is unser Schmerz,*

*Kum-zhe du mit Treist un Liebe, gutes heisses jüdisch Herz!  
Brüder, Schwester, hot rachmones: groiss un schrecklich is di Nott,  
Giebt di Toite oif Tachrichtim, giebt di Lebedige Brott!*

A little later, the young poet Bialik gave powerful utterance to his feeling of wraith and shame in his "Burden of Heroes." He makes God address these words to the martyred nation:

Your dead have died in vain, and neither you nor I  
Can say for what they gave their lives, and why . . .  
No tears shall flow for you!—the Lord swears by His Name—  
For though the pain be great, great also is the shame.  
And which of them the greater, thou, son of man, decide . . .

In picturing the memorial services held in honor of the Ashkenaz victims at the synagogue, he angrily exclaims in the name of God:

Lift thine eyes and look how steeped they are in grief.  
You hear them cry and sob and mournful prayers read.  
You see them beat their breasts and for forgiveness plead . . .  
What are they praying for? . . . Tell them to protest!  
To shake their fists at Me and Justice to demand!  
Justice for all they've suffered throughout the generations.  
So that My Heaven and Throne shall quake to their foundations!

Neither the pogroms at the beginning of the eighties, nor the Moscow atrocities at the beginning of the nineties can compare, in their soul-stirring effect upon Russian Jewry, with the massacre of Kishinev. It awakened the burning feeling of martyrdom, but with it also the feeling of heroism. All were seized by one and the same impulse—the organization

*Heaven Nemirov.* This heading was chosen to appose the canon. At the same Kishinev would not be mentioned, Nemirov was known, being the name of the town which yielded the largest number of victims during the Cossack massacres of 1918. (See pp. 146, et seq.) In a later edition the poem was renamed *Heaven Nemirov*, "In the city of slaughter."

of self-defence, as if to say: "Since the Government fails to defend our life and honor, then we ourselves are bound to defend it." The pogrom panic which spread over the entire South following upon the terrible days of April 6-7 led to the organization of self-defence societies in a number of cities. Plehve knew of these preparations, and found himself in a difficult position. He realized that these endeavors might interfere with the engineering of the pogroms, since the latter would no longer be safe for the murderers and plunderers, and he was, moreover, full of apprehension that these self-defence societies might become hotbeds of a revolutionary propaganda and provide a training ground for political demonstrations. These apprehensions were voiced in a circular issued at the end of April, in which the Minister instructed the governors, first, that "no self-defence societies should be tolerated," and, second, that the authorities should adopt measures for the "prevention of violence" and the "suppression of lawlessness." Subsequent events showed that the latter order was never put into effect. The first instruction, however, was carried out with relentless cruelty, and, during the following pogroms, the troops made it their first business to shoot down the members of the self-defence.

Such being the frame of mind of Russian Jewry, the ukase of May 10, 1903, opening up to the Jews for "free domicile" one hundred and one localities in various governments of the Pale of Settlement, which had hitherto been barred to them under the "Temporary Rules" of 1882, was received with complete indifference. As a matter of fact, many of the rural settlements, included in that ukase, were in reality towns which had been converted into "villages," at the instigation of spite-

for officials, for the sole purpose of rendering them inaccessible to the Jews. The stolen property was now returned with a slight surplus. The expected gift, which seemed to be offered to the Jews as a compensation for the Kishinev horrors, could not but fill them with disgust. Paradoxically it may be remarked that the Government itself nullified the moral effect of its "act of grace" by issuing on the same day a new repressive law prohibiting the privileged Jews who were entitled to the right of domicile outside the Pale of Settlement from acquiring real property in the villages and hamlets. The knot of exploitation was loosened by a hair's breadth in one place, and tightened in another.

Grief and shame over "the Kishinev days" armed the hand of Pinchas Pasternak, a high-minded Jewish youth, against the most culpable instigator of the massacre—Krushevan. Pasternak, the son of a military surgeon, travelled from Kiev, where he was a student at the Polytechnicum, to St. Petersburg to bring punishment on the miserable hireling of Jédisaphéa, who had caused the Kishinev conflagration by his criminal newspaper agitation. On June 4, 1904, he assailed Krushevan in the heart of the capital, on the so-called Nevski Prospekt, wounding him in the neck with a knife. The wound proved of no consequence, and the "victim" was able to go home, without accepting the first aid proffered to him in a Jewish drug store nearby. Pasternak was arrested and brought to trial. At the preliminary examination he frankly confessed that he had intended to avenge the Kishinev massacre by killing Krushevan. Krushevan, now more ferocious than ever, came out in his newspaper *Zemlya* that the Jewish avenger be court-martialled and executed, and his demand was echoed



by the entire anti-Semitic press. The case was tried in a district court behind closed doors, the Government of Plehve evidently fearing the appearance of the sanguinary ghost of Kishinev in the court-room.

Krushevan was represented by the anti-Semitic lawyer Shmakov, who subsequently figured in the Beilis trial. The counsel for Dashevski (the lawyer Gruzenberg and others) pleaded that his client's act had been inspired by the intention not to kill, but merely to voice his protest against the unbridled criminal activity of Krushevan. Dashevski received the severe sentence of penal military service for five years (August 26). An appeal was taken to the Senate, but the judgment of the lower court was sustained. The youth who, in a fit of righteous indignation, had given vent to the outraged feelings of his martyred nation, was put in chains and sent into the midst of murderers and thieves, while the venal instigator, whose hands were stained with the blood of numerous victims, escaped unscathed, and assisted by public funds, continued his criminal activity of fanning the hatred of the populace against the Jews.

#### 4. DOCTOR HERZL'S VISIT TO RUSSIA

The alert bureaucratic mind of Plehve was quick to make its deductions from the Dashevski case. He realized that the Kishinev massacre would inflame the national Jewish sentiment and divert the national or Zionist cause into the channel of the revolutionary movement. Accordingly, on June 24, 1903, Plehve issued a circular to the governors, which was marked "strictly confidential," and sent out through the Police Department, ordering the adoption of energetic measures

against "the propaganda of the ideas of Zionism," which had sprung from its original aim—the transfer of Jews to Palestine—and "then directed its activity towards strengthening the Jewish national idea," preaching "the organization of the Jews in isolated societies in the places of their present residence." Acting upon these orders, the police began to persecute the Zionists in a number of cities, prohibiting the sale of Jewish Colonial Trust shares, collections for the Jewish National Fund, and meetings and conferences of the Zionist societies.

Shortly thereafter, on July 25, the leader of the Zionists, Dr. Herzl, arrived in St. Petersburg to induce the Russian authorities to discontinue these persecutions. Apart from this immediate object, Herzl had another more important mission in mind. He hoped to obtain a promise from the Russian Government to exert a diplomatic pressure upon Turkey in favor of permitting the settlement of Jews in Palestine on a large scale. During his four interviews with Plehve, the Zionist-leader succeeded in convincing the minister that "it was in keeping with the interests of the Russian Government to assist the Zionist movement." Plehve replied—and subsequently confirmed his reply in writing—that the Russian Government was willing to help Zionism so long as its political activity was directed towards the attainment of its aims outside of Russia, towards the creation of a Jewish center in Palestine and the emigration of the Jews from Russia, but that as soon as the movement would be turned inwards, that is, towards the propaganda of the Jewish national idea and the organization of Jews in Russia itself, it would not be tolerated, being subversive of the Russian national policies. Herzl assured Plehve

that political Zionism *sans phrase* had no other aim in view, except the creation of a center outside of the Diaspora.

Both Plehve and Herzl seemed to be satisfied with the results of their conversation. Herzl saw also the Minister of Finance, Witte, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lamadorff, and left St. Petersburg in a hopeful mood. On his way to St. Petersburg, particularly during his stay in Vilna, Herzl was the object of stormy ovations by the Zionists. At the same time, he was severely criticized by the representatives of other Jewish political groups who thought that he had lowered the national dignity of the Jewish people by conducting negotiations for the salvation of Jewry with the man on whose forehead was stamped the Cain's mark of Kishinev.

It seems that the severe crisis which had set in for political Zionism, when the hope for obtaining a charter from the Sultan had receded into a distance, had impelled Herzl to catch at a straw, at negotiations with the Russian Government. He was evidently of the opinion that the Russian Pharaohs who had countenanced the methods of reducing the Jewish population in Russia, such as had been practised at Kishinev, might be willing to achieve the same object by rendering its diplomatic assistance to the Zionist plans. A pledge in this direction was actually given to Herzl. But Herzl overestimated the importance of the promises made to him by potentates who merely looked upon him as a noble-minded dreamer.

Two weeks after Herzl's visit to St. Petersburg, the acuteness of the Zionist crisis manifested itself at the sixth Congress at Basle (August 11-16, 1903). On that occasion Herzl announced his new project, the colonization of Uganda, in British East Africa, by virtue of a charter which had been

offered to him by the British Government. He pointed out that this project had a definite aim in view—the amelioration of the terrible condition of Russian Jewry, for which purpose Zion at that particular moment was not available. Herzl's pronouncement won the Congress in twain: one section seized enthusiastically upon the Uganda project, which held out the promise of at least a temporary shelter in Africa, a *Nachlager*, for a part of the agglutinated nation. The other section protested violently against this attempt to create a "Zionism without Zion," against the abandonment of Palestine and the higher aspirations of the movement. After many stormy and soul-stirring scenes, the majority of the Congress adopted a resolution to send an expedition to Uganda to investigate the offered country from the point of view of its fitness for Jewish colonization. Thereupon, all the opponents of the Uganda project, the so-called *Nein-sager* (the "Nay-sayers"), mostly Russian Zionists, left the Congress hall in a body.

The movement was now rent by a severe conflict, the result of its struggle between the two principles which had long been enmeshed in the theoretic foundations of Zionism: *Palestinarismus* and *Territorialismus*. This internal conflict culminated in an open split between these two principles. Out of the Zionist movement was born the Territorialist Organization, which proclaimed as its object the creation of a Jewish autonomous center on any available point of the globe. For the Lord of Kallines cried out for an exodus from the new Egypt. The emigration to the United States, where the prisoners of Babel had in the course of twenty years, beginning with 1881, succeeded in forming a big Jewish center, had passed the pallid mark, and was expected to assume larger and



larger dimensions. The Jewish public press insisted on necessity "of regulating the emigration to America not only as a social-economic, but also as a national factor." It pointed out that a considerable portion of the historic nation center in Russia and Poland was, under the pressure of external events, in the process of removing to North America, and practical Jewish politics had the direct duty of organizing great rising center of Jewry.

CHAPTER XXXIV  
CONTINUED POGROMS AND THE RUSSO-  
JAPANESE WAR

1 THE POGROM AT HOMEL AND THE JEWISH SELF-DEFENCE

As never had the Zionist Congress, at which the heated discussions concerning the salvation of Judaism were interrupted with acrobatic lamenting the martyrs of Kishinev, could its sessions than a new catastrophe broke out in the bosom of the Tsar—the pogrom at Homel, in the Government of Minsk. In this lively White-Russian town, in which the twenty thousand Jews formed fully one-half of the population, public Jewish life was marked by great vigor. There existed in the city important societies of Zionists and Socialists. Both of these parties had organized several self-defence contingents, and it was to be expected that the disgrace of Kishinev would not be repeated at Homel, and that, in case of an attack, the Jews would give a good account of themselves.

On August 29, 1903, a fight broke out on the market-place between a crowd of Jews and Christians. The cause of the quarrel was a trivial incident, one peasant trying to carry off from a Jewish store a barrel of herrings at a lower price than those demanded by the storekeeper. The rowdyish purchaser was pushed out of the store, but the peasants on the market-place took sides with him, and in the ensuing fight between them and the Jew, one peasant was accidentally killed. The peasants were armed and took to their heels, while the police began to make arrests among the Jews. The Jews might have been

satisfied with the fact that their energetic attitude had succeeded in preventing a pogrom, did they not anticipate the revenge which was sure to be wreaked upon them.

Two days passed in a state of tense agitation. On the third day, on September 1, a crowd of Russian workingmen, numbering about two hundred, issued forth from the railroad shops, and began to demolish Jewish residences and houses of worship. The rioters were joined by a mob of stone-cutters, day-laborers, and ragamuffins. Here and there the crowd was incited by a few "intellectuals": a merchant, a student, and a teacher. On the Konnaya Square, the mob was checked by a large detachment of the Jewish self-defence, consisting of several hundred men. The rioters were on the point of giving way before the gallant attack of the self-defence; but at that moment the troops appeared on the scene, and fired a volley in the direction of the Jews, resulting in three killed and several wounded. The assistance rendered by the troops filled the rioters with fresh courage, and they continued their work of destruction with renewed vigor. All over the town a chain of soldiers shielded the attacking hordes against the Jewish self-defence contingents which tried in vain to break through the chain. The defenders were driven off with rifle butts and bayonets, while the rioters were allowed to destroy and murder without let or hindrance. In the evening, the pogrom was stopped; the results were twelve killed or dangerously wounded Jews, eight killed or dangerously wounded Christians, a large number of maltreated and slightly wounded Jews and over two hundred and fifty devastated Jewish residences and stores. Among those arrested by the police was a considerably larger number of self-defending Jews than of attacking Christians.

Two days later, the governor of Moghilev came to Homel, and, having summoned the Jews to the Town Council, treated them to the following harangue:

"I am sorry for the unhappy victims, but how could such bitter ones have arisen? Religious toleration in Russia is complete. The cause of the latest events lies deeper. The Jews have now become the leaders and instigators in all movements directed against the Government. This entire "Hund" and the Social Democrats—they are all Jews. You are yourselves to blame for all that has happened. You do not educate your children properly. You have no influence over them. But at least you can surrender them, pointing them out to the Government, whereas you conceal them. You propagate disobedience and opposition to the Government among an uncivilized population. But the Russian populace does not care for it and turns against you.

It would seem as if Plahve himself had spoken through the mouth of the governor. The Russian functionary expressed with naive and clumsy frankness the hidden thought of the Chief of the Political Inquisition—the idea of punishing the fathers for the revolutionary leanings of their children, who were to be surrendered to the police, and of discrediting the entire Russian liberty movement as a "Jewish cause." In a Government communication which appeared after the pogroms at Homel were reported in such a way as to suggest that they were brought about by an attack of the Jews upon Russian residents and upon the troops, in consequence of which the latter had been forced to fire in "self-defence." The final conclusion was formulated thus: "The cause of the disorders lies in the extremely hostile and defiant attitude of the local Jews toward the Christians." This was the actual pretext offered as an official statement, and the tortured were put forward as the torturers.



The Homel pogrom did not attain to the dimensions of the Kishinev massacre, nor was it as painful to the moral consciousness of the Jews. For in Homel the Jews did not allow themselves to be beaten and slaughtered like sheep, but put up a valiant defence. Had the troops not turned against the self-defence, the pogrom would not have taken place, and the cowardly rabble would have taken to flight before the gallant defenders of their national honor. Already in the spring, Plehve had foreseen that the Jews would attempt to organize a self-defence of their own, and he had in his previously mentioned circular declared in advance that this most fundamental right of human beings to defend their lives was "inadmissible." Accordingly, several Jewish heroes paid with their lives for having violated this ministerial circular. Their death was the foreboding of a new Jewish martyrdom. All this had the natural effect of enormously intensifying the revolutionary sentiments of the Jewish youth and of inspiring them with hatred towards a régime which permitted some of its citizens to commit murder and prohibited others to defend their lives.

## 2. THE KISHINEV MASSACRE AT THE BAR OF RUSSIAN JUSTICE

In the fall of 1903 the judicial investigation in connection with the spring pogrom in Kishinev was nearing its end. The investigation was conducted with a view to obliterating the traces of the deliberate organization of the pogrom. The representatives of Government authority and of the better classes whose complicity in the Kishinev massacre had been clearly established were carefully eliminated from the trial, and only the hired assassins and plunderers from among the

over classes, numbering about four hundred men, were brought to justice. Prompted by fear lest the terrible truth might leak out in the court, the Ministry of Justice ordered the case to be tried behind closed doors. By this act, the much-stained Russian Government refused in advance to rehabilitate itself before the civilized world, which looked upon it as the instigator of the catastrophe.

In the court proceedings, the echo of which penetrated beyond the walls of the closed court-room, the counsel for the defense from among the best representatives of the Russian bar (Karatchevski, Sokolov, and others, who were Christians, and the Jews Ginzberg, Kalmerovich, and others) succeeded in proving that the prisoners at the bar were only blind tools in the commission of the crime, whereas the organizers of the massacre and the ringleaders of the mob were escaping justice. They demanded that the case be probed to the bottom. The court refused their demand, whereupon the lawyers, having stated their reasons, withdrew from the court-room one after the other. The only advocates left were the anti-Semites

(One of the instigators, Pissarevski, a notary public, had blown out his brains before the beginning of the trial. Other instigators from among the Kishinev intelligentsia appeared merely as witnesses.)

The speech of Karatchevski justifying his withdrawal was particularly powerful. He openly declared that the pogrom was only "the fulfillment of a criminal order given from above." "The name of Kishinev," he said, "was converted during the excesses into an immense arena of antimony, where, before the eyes of curious spectators from among the administration and the army, before a festively attired crowd, a terrific drama was enacted in the depths of the arena." From the one side defendants were driven onto the arena, and from the other maddened mobs were set at them, until the signal to stop was given, and the frightful spectacle was ended at once."

Shmakov and other whole-hearted defenders of the Kishinev massacre, who regarded the latter as a manifestation of the honor and conscience of the Russian people. In the end, the court sentenced a score of murderers and rioters of the first group to hard labor or penal service, dismissing at the same time the civil actions for damages presented by the Jews.

Six months later the Kishinev case came up before the Senate, the Jews appearing as complainants against Governor von Raaben (who had been dismissed after the pogrom), Deputy-Governor Ustrugov, and the Kishinev Chief of Police, upon whom they fastened the responsibility. The bureaucratic defendants cynically declared "that the losses suffered by the Jews have been covered many times over by contributions from Russia, Western Europe, and America." All the eloquence of the well-known lawyer Vinaver and of his associates failed to convince the judges of the Senate, and the petition for damages was dismissed. The Government did not wish to create a precedent for compensating pogrom victims out of public funds, for "this might place the representatives of the administration in an impossible position," as was stated with naïve frankness by von Raaben, since it might become necessary to increase the imperial budget by several million rubles a year.

In the midst of these ghastly proceedings Plehve conceived the plan of "regulating the legislation concerning the Jews." In August, 1903, he sent out a circular to the governors, calling upon them, in view of the extraordinarily complex and tangled condition of the Russian laws affecting the Jews, to point out ways and means "of bringing these legal enactments into proper order and into as harmonious a system as possible."

In reply to this circular, the governor of Vilna, Pahlen, submitted an extensive memorial, in which he pointed out that the restrictive laws within the boundaries of the Pale of Settlement might to be repealed on account of their pernicious political influence, since they were driving the Jews into the arms of the paupers or revolutionaries. At the same time he suggested to retain the repressive measures "against the maintenance of the injurious characteristics of Judaism on the part of certain individuals" and also to exclude the Jewish youth from the Christian schools and establish for them special elementary and intermediate schools under the supervision of Christian teachers. A few other governors, among them the new governor of Moscow, Urussov, also expressed themselves in favor of mitigating the repressive policy against the Jews.

In January, 1904, a committee of governors and of several officials representing the Ministry of the Interior met to consider the Jewish question. From the very beginning the members were given to understand that in "the highest places" every thought of the slightest mitigation of the conditions of Jewry was taboo. The only liberal member of the committee, Governor Urussov, subsequently stated that after the Kishinev pogrom and the agitation raised by it "one could no longer tangibly the unfriendly attitude of the highest spheres toward the Jews" — in other words, that the hatred toward the Jews was shared personally by the Tsar and by his family. The committee therefore applied itself to the task, not of reforming Jewish legislation, but rather of systematizing the anti-Jewish body of laws. Its labors were interrupted by the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, on January 27, 1904.



## 3. THE JEWS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

On the day following the declaration of war, the organ of Russian Jewry, the *Voskhod*, wrote as follows:

This is not the time to irritate the old wounds. Let us endeavor, as far as it is in our power, to forget also the recent expulsion from Port Arthur,<sup>1</sup> the pogroms of Kishinev and Homel, and many, many other things. . . . Let the Jewish parents not think of the bitter fate of their children who had been thrown overboard [by being barred from the educational establishments]. The Jews will go forth into battle as plain soldiers, without any hope of attaining an officer's rank, or shoulder-straps, or distinctions—the blood of our sons will flow as freely as that of the Russians.

The Jews marched to the Far East to assist Russia in making the province of Manchuria part of Siberia in which they were forbidden to reside. The number of Jews at the front was disproportionately large—it amounted to some thirty thousand, owing to the fact that, in accordance with the usual military regulations, the Jewish recruits from the Western governments were generally despatched to Siberia, so that, at the very outset, they were near the theatre of military operations. Disproportionately large was also the number of Jewish physicians in the reserves. They were mobilized at once, evidently for the reason that they lived on their private practice and were not allowed to occupy any state or public office, whereas the Russian physicians were not drawn upon to the same extent, so as not to divert them from their administra-

<sup>1</sup> About two months before the war, the Russian viceroy of the Far East had prohibited the Jews from residing in Port Arthur and upon the Kuantung Peninsula, whence the Russians were expelled by the Japanese a year later.

the municipal, or Zemstvo services'. Hundreds of Jewish specialists had to work and to encounter the murderous fire of the Japanese because of the fact that an unjust law deprived them of the right of civil service in time of peace.

While scores of thousands of disfranchised Jews were fighting for the prestige of Russia in the Far East, the whip of oppression did not cease to lash their brethren at home. In a matter of days the authorities began to expel the families of the soldiers and physicians who had been sent to the war, on the ground that with the departure of the head of the family the wife and children had forfeited the right of residence, the law being conditioned by the profession of the husband or father. This policy, however, was too monstrous even for St. Petersburg, and Pétlev was even forced to decree that the families of the mobilized Jews should be left in their places of abode, "pending the termination of the war."

Though the Government was compelled to relax for a while its oppression of the Jews, social Judeophobia, fanned by the chauvinism incident to war time, broke out with greater violence than ever. Irritated by the rapid fallure of the Russian arms and by the unexpected military superiority of the Japanese, the reactionary press, headed by the *Nedelny Freeman*, began to circulate preposterous rumors to the effect that the Jews were secretly helping the Japanese, their "kinsmen by race," in order to wreak their vengeance upon Russia for having perpetrated the Kishinev massacre. The story of the Jewish-Japanese alliance issued from the public press of the capital to

Out of the thirty physicians who were mobilized in Kiev twenty-one were Jews. In Odessa, the Jews furnished twenty-one physicians out of thirty.

make its rounds through the provinces, and each day gave birth to a rumor more absurd than the other: the Jews are exporting gold abroad, they are purchasing horses for Japan, they are collecting money to build cruisers for the Mikado, they are provoking England and America against Russia, and similar preposterous stories. It was clear that these rumors were the work of a gang of unscrupulous agitators à la Krushevan, who were eager to instigate anti-Jewish pogroms on a modern basis—the accusation of “treachery.” This assumption is confirmed by the additional fact that these incendiary rumors were particularly circulated in February and March, before the Easter festival, the old-time pogrom season, just as in the preceding year the ritual murder libel of Dubossary had been kept afloat during the same months. “The incendiaries have already set out upon their work”—with these words the Jewish organ *Voskhod* warned its readers in its issue of March 11. A week later, the same paper had occasion to publish accounts of the panic which had spread among the Jewish population, particularly in the South. In Kishinev, a second pogrom was feared, calling forth an intensified emigration to America. In Odessa, the Jews were agitated by sinister rumors, and began to prepare themselves for self-defence. This state of alarm was reflected in the foreign press. It was rumored that the American ambassador at St. Petersburg had received instructions to make representations to the Russian Government—which rumor was subsequently officially denied.

Fortunately the Government itself came to the conclusion that the time of war was not a fit opportunity for arranging pogroms. The governors received orders to adopt energetic measures for the prevention of Passover excesses.

Governor Urussov of Rostov and the city governor of Ruman addressed serious warnings to the Russian population. These alone had the desired effect. As soon as the police and population realized that the pogroms were not desired from above, the agitation collapsed, and in April the papers were able to tell their readers that "Passover has passed quietly everywhere." In his *Memoirs* Urussov tells us that, during the same day preceding the Easter festival in Kishinev, he had been engaged, together with the Chief of Police, in working out a plan looking to the maintenance of public order in the city; during this conference he noticed that the Chief of Police was rather hesitant and puzzled. This hesitation continued until the governor received from Plevko a telegram in which, calling upon him to prevent pogroms. No sooner had Urussov shown the Chief of Police the despatched telegram than the latter exclaimed: "Don't trouble yourself—now there will be no disorders in Kishinev." Such was the result in that the provincial administrators had been trained. Without a special order from St. Petersburg, they did not have the courage to suppress the pogroms.

#### 4. THE "POLITICAL SPRING"

On the morning of July 16, 1904, the square before the Warsaw depot in St. Petersburg presented a terrible sight. Upon the pavement lay the blood-stained body of Plevko, who had been smothered by the hands of the Russian terrorist Sazonov while on his way to Liverpool where he was to report to the Tsar. This meant that the revolution had again raised its head, after two years of frenzied police terrorism, and in spite of all attempts to divert the attention of the public from the neces-



sity of reforms, first by pogroms and then by the war against Japan—Plehve had insisted upon the declaration of war, hoping to drown the “seditious” movement in chauvinism—the revolutionary spectre was once more haunting the country. The martyrs of the autocratic inquisition perceived the “finger of God” in the calamities caused by the war and in the miserable end of Plehve. In February, 1904, the Russian censor confiscated an issue of the *Voskhod* in which a young Jewish sibyl, in a poem entitled “To Haman,” referring to the biblical *Mene, Mene, Tekel u-Farsin*, predicted a shameful death for the new Haman who was easily identified as the hero of Kishinev. One could feel in the air the coming of a cleansing tempest. Even the reactionary Government was taken aback by the approaching storm. It did not dare to answer the terrorism of the revolution with police terrorism. On the contrary, it made an attempt to moderate the régime of serfdom.

On August 11, on the occasion of the birth of the heir-apparent Alexis, an imperial manifesto was issued, granting “favours” and “privileges” to the population, the most important of which consisted in the abrogation of corporal punishment for peasants and soldiers. On the same day, a ukase was promulgated in which the Tzar “thought it *just* to introduce, pending the general revision of the legislation affecting the Jews, several amendments in the enactments concerning their rights of residence at present in force.” The amendments were trifling: the Jews with a higher education were permitted to live in the villages and acquire real property there, as well as to carry on business everywhere. Those who had participated in the Japanese war, and had distinguished them-

alive or had committed themselves irretrievably were to be accorded the right of universal domicile. The wives and orphaned children of the Jews with a higher education were granted the right of residence even after the death of their husbands and fathers. These rights were the only ones which the Government thought it "just" to confer upon the Jews, who had sent thirty thousand people into the active army to fight on the fields of Manchuria. The Jewish public received this apparently gift with chilly indifference, and turned its gaze to wider horizons which were then opening up before Russia. The country was on the eve of a "political spring."

On August 26 the post of Minister of the Interior was conferred to Sergey I. Mironov, who in his previous capacity of Governor-General of Vilna had displayed comparative administrative leniency. The new leader of internal Russian politics promised that he would strive for the restoration of "conciliation" between the Government and the people by adjusting his actions to the demands of "true progress." The Jewish population which waited upon him at Vilna and the representatives of the foreign press were told that as far as the Jewish question was concerned, he would be guided by justice and fairness. Unfortunately, at the very beginning he showed himself powerless to stem the new tide of pogroms. At the end of August, the Russian South was the scene of several "regular" pogroms, beginning with a quarrel in a Jewish store and ending with the demolition of Jewish stores and synagogues—as was the case in the town of Smyrna, in the Government of Kars, on August 22, or in the city of Rymni, in Volynia, where a similar attempt was made on the same day.

Soon these "regular" riots gave way to a new variety of pogroms, which were distinguished by a peculiar coloring and might be termed "mobilization pogroms." The mobilized Russian reserve troops, wrought up over their impending departure to the fields of death in Manchuria where the Russian army suffered defeat after defeat, directed their protest along the line of least resistance—against the Jews. The soldiers, fortifying themselves with goodly doses of alcohol, began their "gallant exploits," and, accompanied by the street mobs, engaged in the task of devastating Jewish homes, maltreating their inmates, and looting their property. A sanguinary pogrom took place in Alexandria, in the government of Kher-son, on September 6 and 7. On the sacred day of Yom Kippur a horde of intoxicated assassins invaded the synagogue which was crowded with worshippers, and butchered there twenty people in a most barbarous fashion. Among the severely wounded, who soon afterwards died from the wounds, were several gymnasium and university students. The police made no attempt to stop the killing and looting, and only on the second day, when the excesses were renewed, the Cossacks were summoned from an adjacent town, and succeeded in restoring order.

A month later, the mobilized Russian reservists began to perpetrate a series of pogroms in the North, in the region of White Russia. In the city of Moghilev the lawlessness of the soldiers and the local hooligans assumed appalling dimensions (October 10). The poorest quarters of the town suffered most. Among the victims of the riots were also the families of Jewish reservists who had gone to war. From the capital of the government the pogrom epidemic spread all over the

region. Everywhere the intoxicated "crusaders," prior to their departure for Manchuria engaged in destruction, looting, and incendiarism. In some places, as was the case in the government of Vitebsk, the rioters acted with perfect religious freedom, and even attacked the police, although the center of the "edge" was still occupied by the Jews.

The government was manifestly unwilling to adopt energetic measures against the "defenders of the Fatherland" for fear of creating them still further and swelling the program of liberation. It was not until the end of October that the common persons died out.

### 1. THE HOMEL POGROM BEFORE THE RUSSIAN COURTS

In the same month of October, 1904, the case of the Homel pogrom of the previous year came up before the Court of Appeals of the Government of Kiev, which held its sessions at Homel. The department of justice had taken a whole year to prepare the evidence, prompted by the desire not so much to investigate the case as to entangle it and present it in a perverted political interpretation. The investigation which had started in the lifetime of Plehve and proceeded under the pressure of the anti-Semitic reactionary, Minister of Justice Maravayev, resulted in a bill of indictment which was a flagrant example of deliberate misrepresentation. The whole affair was pictured as an anti-Russian pogrom which had been perpetrated by the Jews. According to this version, the Jews of Homel, wishing to avenge the Kishinev massacre, had taken up arms and attacked the Christian population on August 29, thereby setting forth a counter-pogrom on the part of the Russian workingmen on September 1, when again the armed Jewish



self-defence had taken an aggressive attitude and thereby forced the soldiers to shoot at them. Sixty people were indicted on this charge, among them thirty-six Jews, representing the part of the population which had been the victims of the pogrom. The Jews who had dared to defend themselves stood at the prisoners' bar side by side with their assailants. Yielding to the pressure of public opinion, the Government decided to have the Homel case tried in open court, but the president of the tribunal was instructed to eliminate from the judicial proceedings all political revelations which might embarrass the Government. The élite of the legal profession, both among Jews and non-Jews (Vinaver, Sliosberg, Kalmanovich, Ratner, Sokolov, Kupernik, Zarudny, and others), assembled at Homel to plead the cause of the indicted Jews and to defend the action for damages brought by the Jewish pogrom victims. The trial was drawn out for nearly three months, reducing itself to a duel between the counsel who endeavored to bring out the facts, and the bench which was anxious to suppress them. The depositions of the witnesses and the cross-examinations of the Jewish lawyers succeeded in demolishing the entire structure of the indictment, but when the case reached the stage which was bound to lead to the detection of the real authors of the pogrom and lay bare the conduct of the authorities, the president stopped the counsel despotically, denying them the floor. The gross partiality manifested by the president of the court had the effect that the counsel for the defence lost their patience, and on December 21, after a violent scene, refused to participate in the trial and demonstratively left the court-room.

This action aroused public opinion throughout Russia to an extraordinary degree; it caused a storm of indignation against this official miscarriage of justice, and the fearless defenders received innumerable expressions of sympathy. The indicted Jews, too, joined in the noble demonstration of their lawyers, which was in itself an eloquent plea for a righteous cause. The trial terminated in January, 1905, and ended in the acquittal of half of the accused Jews and Christians and a verdict of guilty against the other half from among both groups. The guilty were sentenced to comparatively light penalties—to imprisonment for brief terms—and, in addition, the court decided to petition the Tzar for a mitigation even of these penalties.

This verdict displayed the Jesuitic character of Russian politics. The reprobate murderers and plunderers from among the Russian group were either acquitted altogether, or were sentenced to trifling penalties and placed on the same level of culpability with the members of the Jewish self-defence whose only crime was that they had stood up for their life, honor, and property. The Russian law journal *Pravo* ("The Law"), the organ of the progressive Russian *intelligentsia*, published on this occasion a strong article which concluded with the following words:

The truth stands out in bold relief even in this verdict, and it does so against the wish of its authors. If, as is implied in this verdict, both the Jews and Christians are guilty of murder, violence, and plunder to a minimum degree only—for how could otherwise the extraordinary leniency of the verdict be justified?—then everybody is bound to ask himself the question: Who then is the real author of all the horrors that were perpetrated at Homel? Those who have followed the course of the judicial in-

vestigation with some degree of attention can only have one answer: Besides the Christians and the Jews, there is still a third culprit, the politically rotten officialdom. This culprit did not stand at the prisoners' bar, but the verdict is against him. . . . The best elements of the Russian public, and the Jews in particular, have been thirsting for justice and for the disclosure of the truth, but it was just that third accomplice who was afraid of justice and has managed to cover it up by a general amnesty.

Such was the end of the two ill-fated years of Russian-Jewish history (1903-1904)—years, marked by the internal war against the Jews and by the external war against Japan, filled with the victories of the reaction at Kishinev and Homel and the defeats of the Russian arms at Port Arthur, Liao-Yang, and Mukden. This ghastly interval of reactionary terrorism, which began to subside only towards the end of 1904, drove from Russia to America more than 125,000 Jewish emigrants who fled for their very lives from the dominions of the Tzar.

However, at the end of the long nightmare, the political horizon began to clear up. The tide of the liberty movement surged forward again and it looked as if the Russian people, and with it tormented Russian Jewry, would soon behold the new dawn. Yet the six million Jews of Russia were destined to pass through two more stormy years, standing between the firing lines of autocratic despotism and the revolutionary movement, and suffering the excruciating agonies of suspense, while hovering between degradation and emancipation.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE REVOLUTION OF 1905 AND THE FIGHT FOR EMANCIPATION

#### 1. THE JEWS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

The "political spring," manifesting itself in the attempt of the Government, headed by Svyatopolk-Mirski, to establish friendly relations with the liberal elements of Russia, gave the first impetus to an open movement for political emancipation. The liberal "conspirators," who had hitherto been secretly dreaming of a constitution, gave public utterance to this tabooed aspiration. In November, 1904, the conference of Zemstvo workers, assembled in St. Petersburg, adopted a resolution pointing out "the anomaly of the political order" of Russia which is founded on autocracy and proclaiming the necessity of associating the representatives of the people in the work of legislation. About the same time, a large mass-meeting, which took the form of a public banquet, attended by lawyers and littérateurs, adopted a similar resolution calling for "the repeal of all national and denominational restrictions." Taking advantage of the temporary relaxation of police despotism, the press spoke up more boldly, while the better elements of the population began to organize themselves in all kinds of public bodies.

The Government was slow in making concessions, and harshly condemned the "boisterous assemblages" which called



for changes in "the unshakable foundations of our political order." Nevertheless, an imperial ukase, published on December 12, 1904, promised a number of partial reforms—improvement of the legal status of the peasantry, enlargement of the activities of the Zemstvos, the establishment of a state insurance for workingmen, relaxation of the severities of police and censorship, and likewise "a revision of the laws restricting the rights of aliens," with the retention of those provisions only "which are called forth by the genuine interests of the state and the manifest needs of the Russian people." It is almost needless to add that the latter clause held forth no promises to the Jews. For their disfranchisement could always be justified by "the genuine interests of the state"—a state built upon the foundations not of law, but of police force. The carrying into effect of the promised semi-reforms was entrusted to a bureaucratic body, the Committee of Ministers. The services of the popular representatives were repudiated.

The new movement for liberty forced further concessions from Russian officialdom, but these concessions could only be wrested from it in small doses and were granted only after a desperate resistance. The "bloody Sunday" of January 9, 1905, marked the beginning of the open revolution in which social, economic, and political demands were interwoven with one another. The demonstration of the striking workingmen of St. Petersburg, who marched in immense numbers to the Winter Palace to present a petition to the Tzar for economic and political reforms, ended in a tragedy. The petitioners who marched with crosses in their hands, under the leadership of the priest and demagogue Gapon, were received with a shower of bullets, resulting in a large number of victims

from among the participants in the demonstration, as well as from among the public. There were also several Jews among them—a first aid nurse, a dentist, a pharmacy student and a journalist. This scandalous conduct of the Tsar, who replied with bullets to a peaceful appeal for reforms, led to a series of demonstrations, labor strikes, and terrorist acts in the provinces.

In the Western governments and in the Kingdom of Poland the Jews played a conspicuous rôle in the revolutionary movement, availing as they did a large number of organized workmen. In Odessa, a Jewish workman by the name of Sullivan fired at the Chief of Police and wounded him (January 19). In Mordukay, a Jewish youth made a vain attempt upon the life of the local Chief of Police who was accused of having instigated the pogrom which had taken place there in the fall of 1904. These incidents served in the hands of the reactionary Government—on January 9, Bryatopol'sk-Mirski had been dismissed for his excessive leaning toward ultraism—as an excuse for continuing its oppression of the Jews as the "ringleaders of the revolution." The president of the Committee of Ministers, Witte, was the only one who advocated a different point of view. At the meeting of the Committee, held on February 11, he contended that "the hostile attitude toward the Government, now noticeable among the Jews, is due to the bad material conditions in which the bulk of Russian Jewry lives, being weighed down by the pressure of restrictive laws." Witte proclaimed that the police authorities could be turned "to fight with redoubled zeal against the anti-governmental activity of the Jews, until the amelioration of the

condition of the aliens, promised in the ukase of December 12, would be carried into effect."

## 2. THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

Notwithstanding these pleas, the Government was slow in realising even the moderate reforms which had been outlined in the imperial ukase. In the meantime the representation of Russian Jewry had decided to place before it their own more comprehensive demands. In February, 1905, several mass petitions, demanding equal rights for Jews, were addressed to Witte. A petition signed by thirty-two Jewish communities—St. Petersburg, Vilna, Kovno, Homel, Berdychev, and others—began with these words:

The measures adopted for the last twenty five years toward the Russian Jews were designed with the deliberate end in view to convert them into a mass of beggars, deprived of all means of sustenance, and of the right of education and human dignity. Consistency and comprehensiveness marked the system of oppression and violence which was skilfully planned and carefully executed . . . . The entire machinery of the state was directed to one end—that of making the life of the Jews in Russia impossible.

The petition repudiates the idea, voiced in the ukase of December 12, 1904, of a gradual amelioration of the position of the Jews, and of a few "mitigations"; for "the insulted dignity of man cannot be reconciled to half measures; it demands the complete removal of rightlessness."

All the Jews of Russia are permeated at the present moment by one thought: that the cruel system of endless restrictions and disabilities undermines the very basis of their existence, that it is impossible to continue such a life . . . . Worn out by all they have had to go through, and filled with grave anxiety about their future

destined, the Jews are waiting at last for their entire enfranchisement—they are waiting for a radical repeal of all restrictive laws, so that, enjoying freedom and equality with all others, they may shoulder to shoulder with the other citizens of this great country, work for its welfare and prosperity.

A memorandum couched in more resolute terms was sent by twenty-six Jewish communities—Moscow, Odessa, and others—and by the radical groups of the communities which had signed the first petition.

We declare—the memorandum states—that we look upon the attempt to satisfy and appease the Jewish population by any partial measures of improvement as doomed to failure. We expect equal rights, as a man expects it when the feeling of human dignity is alive; as a nation it feels it when the feeling of human dignity is alive; as a nation it feels it when the feeling of human dignity is alive.

The memorandum of the Vilna community made the following addition to the last clause: "As a cultured nation, we demand the same rights of national-cultural self-determination which ought to be granted to all the nationalities that go to make up the Russian body politic."

Memoranda and telegrams, addressed to the president of the Committee of Ministers, with the demand for equal rights, were also sent by many individual Jewish communities.

In the meantime, the general revolutionary movement in Russia progressed apace. Professional organizations were springing into existence, such as the leagues of railroad workers, engineers, and lawyers. Here and there, huge railroad strikes were called. The college youth were in a state of ferment, and often went on strike. The agitation was answered by rifle shots and Cossack whips which were used to disperse the demonstrators. The extreme wing of the Socialist party resorted to terroristic acts. A tremendous sensation was caused



by the assassination of Grand Duke Sergius, the governor-general of Moscow (February 4), one of the most detestable members of the house of Romanov. The grand duke, whose name was bound up with the expulsion of tens of thousands of Jews from Moscow in 1891 and with the cruel oppression of the Jewish colony still left there, was the victim of a bomb thrown by a non-Jew, the Social-Revolutionist Kalayev.

The surging tide of the revolution intimidated Nicholas II, and wrested from him still another concession. On February 18, 1905, three enactments were published: an imperial manifesto condemning the revolutionary "unrest" at a time when "the sanguinary war in the Far East" was going on, and calling upon all "well-intentioned persons" to wage war against "the internal sedition." A rescript addressed to Bulyghin, Minister of the Interior, announced the decision of the Tzar "to invite the worthiest men, invested with the confidence of the nation and chosen by the population, to participate in the consideration of legislative projects"—in other words, a popular representation with merely consultative rights. Finally, an ukase addressed to the Senate granted permission to private persons and institutions to lay before the Government their "views and suggestions relating to the perfection of the well-being of the state."

The progressive elements of Russia were not in a mood to be reconciled to the duplicity of these enactments in which threats and concessions followed upon one another, or to the pettiness of the concessions in themselves. They took, however, full advantage of the permission to "lay" their views before the Government, and indulged in an avalanche of resolutions and declarations, demanding the substitution of a

parliamentary system of government for the existing system of autocracy. The Jewish organizations joined in this general campaign. The oldest Jewish organization, the "Society for the Diffusion of Enlightenment Among the Jews," in St. Petersburg, at a meeting held on February 27, adopted the following resolution:

The proper organization of Jewish education such as would be in keeping with the social and cultural peculiarities of the Jewish people, will only be possible when the Jews will be placed on a footing of complete equality of rights with the rest of the Russian population. As a firm guarantee of the uninterrupted cultural development and the complete equality of all nationalities, it is necessary that the legislative power and the administrative control of the country shall have the co-operation of popular representatives, to be elected upon the basis of the universal, direct, and secret vote of all citizens of the country, without any distinction of nationality, denomination or calling.

The need of a non-partisan political organization to direct the struggle for Jewish emancipation which was to be waged by all classes of Jewry—outside the small fractions which had already been united in the labor organization of the "Bund"—was universally felt.

Such an organization was formed at the conference of public-spirited Jews which took place in Vilna at the end of March, 1905. It assumed the name of "The League for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jewish People in Russia," and proclaimed as its object "the realization to their full extent of the civil, political, and national rights of the Jewish people in Russia." The complete civil emancipation of the Jews, the assurance of their proportionate participation in the Russian popular representation, "the freedom of national-cultural self-

determination in all its manifestations," in the shape of "a comprehensive system of communal self-government, the freedom of language and school education"—such was the three-fold program of the League.

It was the first attempt of a Jewish organization in modern history to inscribe upon its banner not only the demand for the civil and political, but also for the national emancipation of the Jewish people, the first attempt to obtain liberty for Jewry as a nationality, and not as a mere denominational group, forming part of the dominant nation, as had been the case in Western Europe during the nineteenth century. The central bureau of the League was located in St. Petersburg, composed of twenty-two elective members, half of whom lived in the capital (M. Vinaver, G. Sliosberg, L. Bramson, and others), and the other half in the provinces (Dr. Shmaryahu Levin, S. M. Dubnow,<sup>1</sup> M. Ratner, and others).

The first resolutions adopted by the League were in substance as follows:

To demand universal suffrage at the elections to the future parliament, with a guarantee of proper representation for the national minorities; to influence the Russian public to the end that the general resolutions demanding equality for all citizens should contain an explicit reference to the emancipation of the Jews; to call upon all the Jewish aldermen in the municipal Dumas to resign their posts, in view of the fact that under the law of 1892, which had deprived the Jews of their franchise at the municipal elections,<sup>2</sup> these aldermen had not been elected by the Jewish population, but had been appointed by the administration—an act which implied an insult to the civic and national dignity of the Jewish people.

[<sup>1</sup> The author of the present volume, who resided in Vilna at that time.]

[<sup>2</sup> See vol. II, p. 246.]

The last-mentioned clause of this resolution, adopted at the first conference of the League, proved effective. In the majority of cities, the Jewish members of the municipal Dumas began to tender their resignations, by way of protest against the disfranchisement of the Jews in the municipal self-government. At first, the authorities were somewhat embarrassed and made an attempt to appoint other Jews in lieu of those that had resigned, but seeing that the Jewish boycott continued, they became "reconciled" to the entire absence of Jewish representatives in municipal self-government. The protest of the Jewish aldermen was drowned in the general noise of protests and demonstrations which filled the air during the revolutionary year.

### 3. THE "BLACK HUNDRED" AND THE "PATRIOTIC" POGROMS

In this wise did the Jewish people, though chafing under thralldom and well-nigh crushed by it, strive for the light of liberty. But the forces of reaction were preparing to wreak terrible vengeance upon the prisoner for his endeavor to throw off his bonds. As the revolutionary tide, which had engulfed the best elements of the Russian people, was rolling on, it clashed with the filthy wave of the Black Hundred, which the underlings of Tzardom had called to the surface from the lowest depths of the Russian underworld. *Acheronta movebo*<sup>1</sup>—this threat was now carried out systematically by the Government of Nicholas II. in its struggle with the emancipatory movement. By letting loose the Russian "nether-world" against the liberal *intelligenzia* and the Zhyds,

[<sup>1</sup> "I shall set the nether-world in motion."]



the reactionaries hoped to achieve three objects at once: to intimidate the liberals and revolutionaries; to demonstrate the unwillingness of the "people" to abolish autocracy in favor of constitutional government, and, finally, to discredit the entire revolutionary movement as "the work of Jewish hands."

✓ The latter end could, in the opinion of the reactionaries, be obtained best by convincing the Russian masses that "the enemies of Christ are the only enemies of the Tzar." An open anti-Jewish agitation was set in motion. Proclamations of the Black Hundred with the appeals, "Slay the students and the Zhyds!" "Remember Kishinev and Homel!" were scattered broadcast. The proclamation of the "Nationalist Society" of Kiev, Odessa, Kishinev, and other cities contained the following sentences:

The shouts "Down with autocracy!" are the shouts of those blood-suckers who call themselves Zhyds, Armenians, and Poles . . . . Be on your guard against the Zhyds! All the misfortunes in our lives are due to the Zhyds. Soon, very soon, the great time will come when there will be no Zhyds in Russia. Down with the traitors! Down with the constitution!

With the approaching Passover season, pogroms were openly organized. The papers were flooded with telegrams from many cities stating that riots were imminent. In some places the governors adopted measures to check the excesses of the savage crowd, but in many localities the pogroms were deliberately permitted or even directly engineered by the police. In the manufacturing city of Bialystok, the center of the Jewish labor movement, the Cossacks assaulted Jewish passers-by on the streets, invaded the synagogues and Jewish homes, cruelly maltreating their inmates and frequently searching them and

taking away their money (April 9-10). During the Passover holidays, peasants made an attack upon the Jews in the town of Dusyaty, in the government of Kovno, looting their property and beating those that dared to oppose them. In the city of Melitopol, in the government of Tavrida, an intoxicated mob demolished and set fire to Jewish stores, and thereupon started to attack the houses of Christians, but the self-defence consisting of Jewish and Christian young men checked the pogrom (April 18-19). In Simferopol, in the same government, the Black Hundred spread a rumor that a Jewish boy, the son of a pharmacist, had desecrated a Christian ikon. A pogrom was set in motion which met with the resistance of the armed Jewish youth and was afterwards checked by the troops (April 22).

The most terrible outbreak took place in Zhitomir. In this quiet center of Volhynia the progressive elements of both the Jewish and the Russian population revelled in the joy of their political honeymoon. As had been the case in other large cities, here, too, the "bloody Sunday" of January called forth political strikes on the part of the workingmen, demonstrations on the part of the college youth, and the circulation of revolutionary appeals. The fact that the movement was headed by the Jewish youth was enough to inspire the Black Hundred to embark upon their criminal task. All kinds of rumors were set afloat, such as that the Jews had been firing at the Tzar's portrait on the field behind the city, that they were preparing to slaughter the Christians, and other absurd stories. At the approach of Passover, the pogrom organizers summoned to their aid a group of "Katzaps," Great-Russian laborers, from Moscow. The Jews, anticipating the danger, began to

arm themselves in self-defence, and made their preparations openly. A clash between the "Black" and the "Red" was inevitable. It came in the form of a sanguinary battle which was fought on April 23-26, matching by its cruelty the pogrom at Homel, though exceeding it vastly by its dimensions.

In the course of three days, the city was in the hands of the black hordes who plundered, murdered and mutilated the Jews. They were fortified not only by quantities of alcohol, but also by the conviction that they were fighting for the Tzar against the "Sicilists,"<sup>1</sup> who clamored for "freedom" and a "republic." The Jewish self-defence performed prodigies of valor wherever they were not interfered with by the police and military, and died gallantly where the authorities actively assisted the savage work of the infuriated rioters. During the three pogrom days fifteen Jews were killed and nearly one hundred wounded, many of them severely. The casualties were mostly among young workingmen and handicraftsmen. But there were also some students among the victims, one of them a Christian, named Blinov, who stood up nobly for the assaulted Jews. The inhuman fiends fell upon Blinov, shouting: "Though you are a Russian, you are a Sicilist and worse than the Zhyds, now that you've come to defend them." The young hero was beaten to death, and the murderers were actively assisted by soldiers and policemen.

On one of those days, on April 25, a heart-rending tragedy took place in the town of Troyanov, in the government of Volhynia, not far from Zhitomir. Having learned of the massacre that was going on in Zhitomir, fourteen brave Jewish

<sup>1</sup> A mutilated form of "Socialists" which is in vogue among the ignorant Russian masses.

young men from the neighboring town of Chudnov armed themselves with cheap pistols, and proceeded to bring aid to their endangered fellow-Jews. On the way, while passing through Troyanov, they were met by a crowd of peasants and workmen who had been aroused by a rumor that Jewish "slaughterers" were marching in order to exterminate the Russians. The infuriated mob fell upon the youths, and, in the presence of the local Jews, savagely killed ten of them, while the others were cruelly beaten. The following account of this ghastly occurrence was given by one of the survivors:

There were fourteen of us. We were on the way from Chudnev to Zhitomir. In Troyanov we were surrounded by Katzaps. They began to search us, taking away everything we had, and then started to beat us with hatchets and clubs. I saw my comrades fall down dead one after the other. Before the constabulary appeared, only four had remained alive, I and three other men. The constabulary ordered us to be carried to the hospital at Zhitomir, but on the way we were wrested by the Katzaps from the rural police and were tortured again . . . . I was roped and dragged to the priest. He begged that I should be left alone. The Katzaps made fun of him, dragged me out again, and started to beat me. The policemen began to tell them that "they would answer for me," since the constabulary had ordered them to get me to Zhitomir. "Well," said the Katzaps, "if that be the case, we will let him go, but before we do this, that hound of a Jew must have a look at his fellow-Zhyds." I was then dragged in an unconscious state to my comrades. I found myself in a pool of water. I had been drenched so as to make me regain consciousness. Then I beheld the dead bodies of my ten comrades . . . . No matter how long I may live, I shall never forget that sight . . . . One of them lay with his head chopped off; another with a ripped stomach . . . . cut off hands . . . . I fell into a swoon, and found myself here in this bed.



In the cemetery of Troysnov one may still behold the graves of the youthful martyrs who unselfishly went to the rescue of their brethren against beasts in human form, and were on the way torn to pieces by these beasts—ten graves which ought to become sacred to the entire Jewish people.

The Government reacted upon the Zhitomir massacre by an official communication in which the facts were deliberately garbled in order to prove that the Jews had called forth the pogrom by their conduct. It was alleged in this communication that, during their shooting exercises in the woods, the Jews had discharged their pistols at the portrait of the Tsar, had hurled insulting remarks at the police escort which was conveying a band of political prisoners, had issued a proclamation in the name of "the criminal party of the Social Revolutionaries" in which the authorities of Zhitomir were accused of preparing the pogrom, and similar charges. The concrete object of the official communication is betrayed in its concluding part in which the governors are enjoined "to explain to the sober-minded section of the Jewish population that, in the interest of the safety of the Jewish masses, it is in duty bound to inspire their coreligionists who have been drawn into the political struggle with the consciousness of the absolute necessity of refraining from arousing by their behavior the hatred of the Christian population against them." Translated into plain terms, the Government order meant: "If you do not wish to have pogroms and massacres, then keep your hands off the liberty movement; but if you will persist in playing a part in it, then the Christian population will make short work of you, dealing with you as with enemies of the Fatherland."

Caught in the general revolutionary ~~confusion~~ which flared up with particular violence in the summer of 1905, after the destruction of the Russian fleet by the Japanese near Tsushima, the Jews reacted upon the pogroms by intensifying their revolutionary activity and swelling the number of self-defence organizations. Russian Jews played an active part in the two wings of the emancipation army, the Constitutional-Democratic as well as the Social-Democratic party, and was represented even in the extreme wing occupied by the Social-Revolutionaries. The majority of these Jewish revolutionaries were actuated by general Russian aspirations, and were ~~thus~~ entirely oblivious of the national interests of Judaism. This, however, did not prevent the ~~harm~~ of the Tsar from visiting the "sin" of the revolution upon the Jewish masses. A vicious circle was the result of this policy: As victims of the old despotism, the Jews naturally threw in their lot with the revolution which promised to do away with it; thereupon uncivilized Russia vented its fury upon them by instituting pogroms which, in turn, pushed them more and more into the ranks of the revolution.

During the summer months of 1905, a new succession of pogroms took place, this time of the military variety. Wrought up over the defeats of the Russian army in Manchuria, and roused by the vile proclamations of the Black Hundred which pictured the Jews as the inner enemy, soldiers and Cossacks began to wreak their vengeance upon this inner enemy, assaulting and killing or wounding Jews on the streets of Minsk (May 26), Brest-Litovsk (May 29-31), Sredletz and Lodz (June 9). In the first three cities, the soldiers plundered and murdered only the Jews. In Lodz, they fired at a mixed Polish-

Jewish demonstration of workingmen. A regular butchery was engineered by the soldiery in Bialystok (June 30). During the entire day, the city resounded with the rifle shots of maddened soldiers who were firing into peaceful Jewish crowds. Fifty dead and a still larger number of wounded were the result of these military exploits.

During the same time a regularly organized pogrom occurred in the southern outskirts of Russia, in the city of Kerch, in the Crimea. On July 27, a peaceful political demonstration of the kind then generally in vogue took place in that city; among the participants were also the Jewish youth. By way of protest, the city-governor and gendarmerie chief organized a "patriotic" counter-demonstration, which was held a few days later, on July 31. Carrying a banner with the portrait of the Tzar and singing the Russian national hymn, the "patriotic" hordes, with the notorious local thieves and hooligans as the predominating element, sacked Jewish houses and stores, and, in the name of patriotism, looted Jewish property—even the so-called respectable public participating in the latter act. When the armed Jewish self-defence began to oppose the rioters, they were scattered by a volley from the soldiers, ten of them being killed on the spot. The subsequent inquiry established the fact that the pogrom had been fully prepared by the police and gendarmerie authorities, which had been in telegraphic communication in regard to it with the Police Department in St. Petersburg. It was a rehearsal of the monstrous October pogroms which were to take place a few months later.

## 4. THE JEWISH FRANCHISE

In the midst of the noise caused by the revolution on the one hand and by the pogroms on the other, the question of popular representation, promised in the ukase of February 18, 1905, was discussed in the highest Government spheres of Russia. A committee, which met under the chairmanship of M. Bulyghin, was drafting a scheme of a consultative popular assembly; as far as the Jews were concerned, it was proposed to exclude them from the franchise, on the ground that the latter would not be compatible with their civil disfranchisement. This proposition, which was in entire accord with the general reactionary trend of Russian politics, called forth a storm of indignation in all circles of Russian Jewry. During the month of June protest resolutions against the contemplated measure were adopted by the Jewish communities of St. Petersburg, Riga, Kishinev, Bobruisk, Zhitomir, Nicholayev, Minsk, Vitebsk, Vilna, and other cities. Many resolutions were couched in violent terms betraying the outraged sentiments of Russian Jewry. As an illustration, the following extract from the Vilna resolution may be quoted:

In the proposed scheme of popular representation, we Jews, a cultured nation of six millions, are placed below the semi-savage aliens of Eastern Russia. The policy of pacification applied to other suppressed nationalities has given way to a policy of terrorism when the Jews are concerned. The mad system, consisting in the endeavor to irritate and infuriate the Jews by medieval persecutions and thereupon wreak vengeance on them for the manifestation of that irritation, has now reached its climax . . . . We appeal to the Russian people, which is now called upon to regenerate the antiquated political structure of the country . . . . We are of the hope that the malign vindictiveness toward the Jews



on the part of the retiring bureaucracy, which is eager to carry over the ferments of corruption into the healthy atmosphere of the future popular representation, will not be realized.

Professor Trubetzkoy, who waited upon the Tsar on June 6, at the head of a combined deputation of Zemstvos and municipalities, pointed out in his famous speech that no one should be excluded from popular representation: "It is important that there should not be any disfranchised and disinherited." The Government was shaken in its resolution, and the Council of Ministers eliminated from the Bulyguin project the clause barring the Jews from voting, justifying this step by the undesirability "to irritate the Jews still further."

The Jewish question was also touched upon in the conferences at Peterhof, which were held during the month of July under the chairmanship of the Tsar, to formulate plans for an Imperial Duma. Naryshkin, a reactionary dignitary, demanded that "the dangerous Jewish nation" be barred from the Duma. But a number of other dignitaries—the Minister of Finance, Kokovtsev, the Assistant-Minister of the Interior, Trepov, and Obolenski and Chikhachev, members of the Council of State—advocated their admission, and the discussions were terminated by the brief remark of the Tsar: "The project [with the insertion of the Council of Ministers in favor of the Jews] shall be left unaltered."

By this action, the Government made itself guilty of a flagrant inconsistency. It conferred upon the Jews the highest political privilege—the right of voting for popular representatives—but left them at the same time in a state of complete civil disfranchisement, even with regard to such elementary liberties as the right of domicile, the right of

transit, and so on. Only one month previously, on June 8, the Tzar had approved the "Opinion" of the Committee of Ministers—in pursuance of the ukase of December 12, 1904, the Committee had been busy discussing the Jewish problem—to the effect that the consideration of the question of ameliorating the condition of the Jews should be deferred until the convocation of the new Parliament. Evidently, the anti-Jewish conscience of the Tzar made it impossible for him to grant even the slightest relief to the Jews who from pariahs had been turned into revolutionaries.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND THE OCTOBER MASSACRES

#### 1. THE FIENDISH DESIGNS OF THE "BLACK HUNDRED"

Soon afterwards, on August 6, 1905, the so-called "Bulyghin Constitution" was made public, providing for a truncated Imperial Duma with a system of representation based on class qualifications and limited to advisory functions but without any restrictions as far as the franchise of the Jews was concerned. "Now," wrote the *Voskhod*, "the Jew has the right to be a popular representative, but he has no right to reside in the place in which the Imperial Duma assembles—in the capital." Russian Jewry, with the exception of its Left wing, was on the point of starting an election campaign to send its representatives to this mutilated Duma, in the hope of attaining through it to a more perfect form of representation, when the stormy course of events brought to the fore new threatening questions. This counterfeit of a national parliament failed to satisfy the Russian democracy, and the struggle with the Government broke out anew with unprecedented energy. Stormy political meetings were held at the universities and at the other institutions of higher learning, which, by an ukase of August 27, had been granted academic self-government. The autonomous professorial councils began to admit Jewish students to the schools, without any restrictive percentage, and the wave of an agitated Jewish youth was drawn into the whirling sea of the Russian student body.

A new succession of strikes followed, arranged by the students, workingmen, and railroad workers. A general Russian strike was being carefully prepared as a last resort in the struggle for a democratic constitution. The army of the emancipation movement was instituting a bloodless revolution, the temporary stoppage of all railroad movements and of all other activities in the country, in the hope of forcing Tzardom to an act of self-abnegation and the proclamation of civil liberties.

The month of September and the beginning of October were spent in these feverish preparations, but at the same time, the black army of absolutism was making its own arrangements for a sanguinary counter-revolution, for regular St. Bartholomew nights, directed against the participants in the emancipation movement, and particularly against the Jews. The plans of the emancipation army were universally known, but the terrible designs of the dark forces of reaction were effectively concealed. Only when the bloody undertaking was accomplished, was it possible to uncover the threads of the criminal pogrom organization, which led from the palaces of the Tzar and the highest dignitaries of state, by way of the Police Department, to the slums of murderers and hooligans. In the disclosures made by Lvov, in November, 1905, in his memorandum to Witte, the president of the Council of Ministers, the officials in the immediate environment of Nicholas II. who had organized the October pogroms were pointed out by name. They were the "patriotic" General Bogdanovich in St. Petersburg, who acted with the blessing of Archbishop<sup>1</sup> Vladimir and with the as-

[<sup>1</sup>In Russian, *Mitropolit*, the highest ecclesiastical dignitary in the Greek-Orthodox Church. There are three Mitropolit in Russia, residing in Petrograd, Moscow, and Kiev.]



assistance of the Imperial camarilla and of many governors and governors-general in the provinces. During the month of September "fighting contingents" of the Black Hundred, whose number, as Bogdanovich boasted in the highest government spheres, amounted to one hundred thousand, were organized all over Russia. In every city the parts to be enacted by the administrators, the police and the pogrom hirelings from among the local riff-raff were carefully prepared and assigned. The pogrom proclamations were printed openly; the "manufacturing" center of this propaganda literature, as was afterwards disclosed in the Imperial Duma by deputy Urussov (former Assistant-Minister of the Interior), was located in the printing office of the Police Department. There can be no question that the Tsar was acquainted, if not with all the details of the preparations, at least with the general plan of arranging counter-revolution by means of carefully engineered massacres of which the Jews were to become the chief victims. Millions of rubles for the organization of the pogroms were appropriated from a secret ten-million ruble fund, the disposition of which lay entirely in the hands of the Tsar.

Such were the conditions which ushered in the month of October, 1905. The first days of the month saw the beginning of the railroad strike; by the middle of the month it had already seized the entire country, accompanied in the industrial centers by a general strike in all lines of productive endeavor. In many cities, collisions took place between the revolutionaries and the military. At first, the Government made an attempt to resort to threats, and all over Russia rang the blood-thirsty cry of the Chief of Police Trepov: "No cartridges shall be spared!" But at the last moment, autocracy recoiled before

the revolutionary tempest and gave way. On October 17, an imperial manifesto was issued, solemnly promising to bestow all civil liberties upon the Russian people—inviolability of person, freedom of conscience, liberty of speech, assemblage and organization, and a legislative Duma in which the representatives of all classes of the population were to have a voice. The manifesto made no mention, however, of the equality of all citizens before the law or of the bestowal of equal rights on the various nationalities, and even in the accompanying memorandum of Premier Witte, the author of the enactment of October 17, the subject was disposed of in a few nebulous phrases.

Nevertheless, even in this hazy form, the manifesto made a tremendous impression. Everybody believed that autocratic Tsardom had been vanquished by the army of liberty and that Russia had been finally converted from a state founded on police force into a body politic based on law. But, on the day following, all these hopes were cruelly shattered. On October 18, in hundreds of cities the carefully concealed army of counter-revolutionaries, evidently obeying a prearranged signal, crawled out from beneath the ground, to indulge in an orgy of blood, lasting a full week (October 18-25), which in its horrors finds no parallel in the entire history of humanity.

## 2. THE RUSSIAN ST. BARTHOLOMEW NIGHT

The principal victims of this protracted St. Bartholomew night were the new Huguenots of the emancipation movement—the Jews. They were to pay the penalty for having assisted in wresting from the despotic Government the manifesto with its promise of liberties. In the course of one week,

X nearly fifty anti-Jewish pogroms, accompanied by bloodshed, took place in various cities (Odessa, Kiev, Kishinev, Kalarash, Simferopol, Romny, Kremenchug, Chernigov, Nicholayev, Yekaterinoslav, Kamenetz-Podolsk, Yelisavetgrad, Orsha, etc.), in addition to several hundred "bloodless" pogroms, marked in regular fashion by the destruction of property, plunder, and incendiarism. The pogroms directed against the Christian participants in the emancipation movement, such as intellectuals, students, etc., in Tver, Tomsk, and other interior Russian cities, amounted in all to a score or two. This disproportion alone shows the direction in which the organized dark forces were active. The strict uniformity and consistency in the carrying out of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy was too palpable to be overlooked.

The customary procedure was as follows: In connection with the manifesto of October 17, the progressive elements would arrange a street procession, frequently adorned by the red flags of the left parties and accompanied by appropriate acclamations and speeches expressive of the new liberty. Simultaneously, the participants in the "patriotic demonstration"—consisting mostly of the scum of society, of detectives and police officials in plain clothes—would emerge from their nooks and crannies, carrying the portrait of the Tzar under the shadow of the national flag, singing the national hymn and shouting, "Hurrah, beat the Zhyds! The Zhyds are eager for liberty. They go against our Tzar to put a Zhyd in his place." These "patriotic" demonstrators would be accompanied by police and Cossack patrols (or soldiers), ostensibly to preserve order, but in reality to enable the hooligans to attack and maltreat the Jews and prevent the victims from defending

themselves. As soon as the Jews assembled for self-defence, they would be driven off by the police and troops. Thereupon, the "patriotic" demonstrators and the accomplices, joining them on the way, would break up into small bands and disperse all over the city, invading Jewish houses and stores, ruin, plunder, beat, and sometimes slaughter entire families.

The most terrible pogrom took place in Odessa. It lasted fully four days. The rioters were openly assisted by the police and troops, and were encouraged by the active support of city-governor Neidhart, and the criminal inactivity of the military governor, Kaulbars. The heroism displayed by the Jewish self-defence was strong enough to beat off the hooligans, but it was powerless to defeat the troops and police. Over three hundred dead, thousands of wounded or crippled Jews, among them many who lost their minds from the horrors, one hundred and forty widows, five hundred and ninety-three orphans, and more than forty thousand Jews materially ruined—such were the results of the battle which was fought against the Jews of Odessa during October 18-21.

Approximately along the same lines the pogrom campaign was conducted in scores of other cities, with a few lurid departures from the customary ritual, as, for instance, in Nyezhin, in the government of Chernigov, where the Jewish community, headed by the rabbi, was forced by the rioters, under the pain of death, to pronounce publicly the oath of allegiance to the Tzar. As a rule the pogroms which occurred in hundreds of cities, towns, and villages, were limited to the destruction of property, although even in small localities, such as in Semyonovka, in the government of Chernigov, the riots were occasionally accompanied by massacres. It may be added



that the outbreaks were not confined to the Pale of Settlement. In a number of cities outside the Pale, such as in Saratov, Voronyesh, and other places with a small Jewish population, the Jewish communities were ruthlessly attacked.

Contemporary history is not yet in a position to depict all the horrors which were perpetrated upon the Jews in Russia in the latter half of October, 1905, or to trace with any amount of accuracy their underlying causes. Let us draw a veil over this bloody spectacle. There will come a time when the world will shudder on learning the truth about the bloody happenings and about the real culprits of this prolonged Bartholomew night at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The sinister counter-revolution which broke out on October 17, the day on which the manifesto of the Tsar was promulgated, threatened to drag the revolution into the abyss of anarchy. All were profoundly aroused by the perfidious Byzantine policy of Nicholas II., who with one hand waved the peace banner before the progressive section of the Russian people, and with the other plunged a knife into its heart—a knife which most of all was to slash Jewry. Not only the parties of the extreme Left, but even the Constitutionists who were willing to accept the promises of the October manifesto, had little faith in their ultimate realization. A reign of chaos ensued. The parties of the Left demanded now a democratic, now even a social, republic. The political and labor strikes, among them those arranged by the Jewish "Bund," assumed the character of anarchy. The peasant or agrarian movement burst forth, accompanied by the burning of manors and estates. Poland and the Baltic region were in the throes of terrorism. Moscow witnessed an armed uprising with barricades and with all the paraphernalia of a

popular revolution (December, 1905). The Government quelled the Moscow rebellion, and resolutely adopted a policy of repression. Arrests, executions, punitive military expeditions, were the means by which the program of the Witte-Durnovo Cabinet was to be carried into effect.

The reactionary camarilla around the Tzar operated in full force, fanning the hatred against the Jews. On December 23, the Tzar received a deputation of the ringleaders of the Black Hundred, who had organized themselves in the "League of the Russian People." One of the speeches appealing to the Tzar to preserve autocracy was devoted to the Jewish question. The deputation begged the Tzar "not to give equal rights to the Jews." To this Nicholas replied laconically: "I shall think it over."

### 3. THE UNDAUNTED STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

The terrible October calamities were faced by Russian Jewry in a spirit of courage and fortitude. It stood alone in its sorrow. The progressive elements of Russian society which were themselves in the throes of a great crisis reacted feebly upon the sufferings of the Jewish people which had become the scape-goat of the counter-revolution. The indifference of the outside world, however, was counteracted by the rise of the Jewish national sentiment among the better classes of Russian Jewry. One month after the pogrom bacchanalia, the "League for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jewish People" held its second convention in St. Petersburg. The Convention which lasted four days (November 22-25) gave public utterance to the feeling of profound national indignation. It voted down the motion to send a deputation to Count Witte, asking

for the immediate grant of equal rights to the Jews. In the resolution repudiating this step the policy of the Government was characterized in these words:

The facts have incontrovertibly proved that the recent pogroms, appalling by their dimensions and by the number of their victims, have been staged with the open connivance and, in many cases, with the immediate assistance and sometimes even under the direction of the police and highest local administration; that the Government, not at all abashed by the monstrous crimes of its executive organs, the local representatives of State authority, has not removed from office a single one of the suspected functionaries, and has taken no measures to bring them to justice.

In view of the fact that Count Witte has repeatedly stated that the Government does not see its way clear to proclaim at the present moment the emancipation of the Jews, supposedly in the interest of the Jews themselves, against whom the agitation of the popular masses might be intensified by such a measure, whereas, in reality, the pogroms are a result of that very rightlessness of the Jews which is fully realized by the masses of the Russian people and by the so-called Black Hundred—the Convention resolves that the sending of a deputation to Count Witte and the entering into negotiations with him will achieve no purpose, and that, instead, all efforts shall be concentrated upon organizing Russian Jewry in the struggle for its equality of citizenship by joining the ranks of the general movement for liberty.

Imbued with the spirit of martyrdom, the Convention remembered the martyr Dashevski, the avenger of the Kishinev massacre,<sup>1</sup> and passed a resolution to convey to the youthful sufferer, who was then languishing in a penal military company, its "enthusiastic greetings."

[<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 81.]

In an outburst of national enthusiasm the Convention adopted the following bold resolution:

In the interest of realizing to their full extent the civil, political, and national rights of the Jewish nationality in Russia, the Convention resolves as follows:

To proceed without delay to call, on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, without discrimination of sex, and by a direct secret vote, an All-Russian Jewish National Assembly in order to establish, in accordance with the will of the entire Jewish population, the forms and principles of its national self-determination as well as the foundations of its internal organization.

It was the project of a national Synedrion, radically different in its conception from the Napoleonic Synedrion convened in 1807.

The third convention of the "League of Equal Rights" was held on February 10-13, 1906, during the election campaign to the first Imperial Duma. The proposal of the Left wing of the League to boycott the Duma, on the ground that it "will prove a bulwark of reaction"—a prediction which was fully justified by events—and to refrain from taking part in the elections, was voted down. On the contrary, a resolution was passed, calling upon the Jews to take a most active part in the elections, to nominate everywhere their own Jewish candidates, and, wherever this was impossible, to give their votes to the non-Jewish candidates on condition that they pledge themselves to support in the Duma the civil, political, and national rights of the Jewish people. The resolution, moreover, contained this clause: "To insist that the Jewish question in the Duma shall be settled unconditionally in connection with the fundamental articles of the Constitution and with the questions of elementary liberties to be granted to all citizens."



An election campaign was set in motion and carried on under the most difficult circumstances. The police authorities took advantage of the state of war which had been proclaimed in many places to interfere with a comprehensive pre-election propaganda, and at the same time the Black Hundred tried to intimidate the Jews by holding out the menace of pogroms during the approaching Passover season. In Poland, the anti-Semitic chauvinists threatened the Jews with all possible reprisals for their "audacious intention" to nominate their own candidates for the Duma, alongside of the candidates of the Christian Poles. Simultaneously, the Jewish group of the Left, the "Bund" and others, followed the policy of boycotting the Duma and did their best to interfere with the elections. However, all these apprehensions proved groundless. The Passover and election pogroms did not take place, and Russian Jewry displayed a vigorous activity in the elections, with the result that twelve Jewish deputies were sent to the first Duma. The most active among these deputies were M. Vinaver, one of the leaders of the general Russian Constitutional-Democratic party and president of the "League for the Attainment of Equal Rights", Dr. Shmaryahu Levin, the well known Zionist; I. Bramson, actively identified with Jewish educational activities, who was affiliated with the Russian Democratic group, known as the *Trudoviki*, or "Laborites." All the Jewish deputies were united on the nationalistic platform formulated by the "League for the Attainment of Equal Rights." By a resolution passed at the fourth Convention of the League, held on May 9-13, 1906, they pledged themselves to co-ordinate their actions in all questions pertaining to Jewish emancipation and to abide by a common discipline, without, however, forming a separate parliamentary fraction.

#### 4. THE JEWISH QUESTION BEFORE THE FIRST DUMA

The first Duma was convened on April 27, 1906, and barely three months later, on July 8, it was dissolved, or rather dispersed by the Tzar, for having displayed a spirit of excessive opposition. The prevailing element in the first Duma was the Constitutional-Democratic majority to which, by their political sympathies, the bulk of Russian Jewry and ten of its twelve representatives in the Duma—the other two stood a little more to the Left—belonged. It was natural for the Jews to expect that a Parliament of this complexion would have no difficulty in solving the question of equal rights for the Jews as one of the most fundamental prerequisites of civil liberty. Unfortunately, this expectation was not justified. The entire brief session of the Duma was spent in an uninterrupted struggle of the Opposition with the unscrupulous Government which was then headed by Goremykin, a hide-bound reactionary. True, in its reply to the speech from the throne, the Duma declared that "neither liberty nor order can be firmly established without the equality of all citizens before the law." But in the pronouncement of the Government of May 13 no word was said about this equality of citizenship. The Jewish deputy Vinaver delivered a powerful speech, in which, among other things, he spoke as follows:

From this platform, from which so much has been said about political liberties, we Jews, the representatives of one of the most tortured nationalities in the land, have not uttered a single word about ourselves, because we did not consider it seemly to speak here of civil inequality . . . Now, however, it is becoming clear to us that the Government has made up its mind to continue on the same road on which it has gone until now, and we are, therefore, bound to declare that, so long as you will connive at civil slavery, there will be no peace in the land.

The mistake made by the Jewish deputies consisted just in the fact that they had not "uttered a single word" about themselves on a former occasion, in reply to the speech from the Throne which had equally failed to make the slightest mention of civil equality—practically affecting only the Jews—and that they did not utter that word with that feeling of righteous indignation to which the representatives of "the most tortured nationality" in Russia were morally entitled.

Later on, the debates in the Duma concerning the Jewish question were, by the force of events, concentrated upon the pogrom policy of the Government. On May 8 an interpellation was introduced regarding the complicity of the Imperial Police Department in instigating the pogroms of 1905. Stolypin, the Minister of the Interior, promised to reply to the interpellation, which was substantiated by documentary evidence, a month later. But before that term had elapsed a new sanguinary pogrom broke out in Bialystok.

In this center of the Jewish revolutionary and labor movement, where, in 1905, the police and troops had already twice staged a Jewish massacre, a new conspiracy was being hatched by the police and military against "the authors of the liberty movement." An accidental act of terrorism, the assassination of the Chief of Police by an unknown culprit, gave the police conspirators a proper occasion to execute their terrible design. On June 1, during a church procession, a pistol was discharged by an *agent provocateur* from among the Black Hundred, and at once a rumor spread like wildfire among the crowd that "the Jewish anarchists are firing at the Christians." The pogrom flared up on the spot. In the course of two days the mob was busy demolishing Jewish houses and stores and attacking the Jews, while at the same time the

police and military were systematically firing at the Jews not only on the streets but also in the houses, in which the unfortunate tried to hide. The bestialities of Kishinev were enacted again. Entire families were slaughtered, human beings were tortured, and hacked to pieces; limbs were cut off from the body, nails driven into the heads. . . . Eighty dead and hundreds of wounded Jews were the result of this new exploit of the counter-revolutionaries.

On June 2, the Imperial Duma received the heart-rending news of the Bialystok massacre, and right there, after the passionate speeches of Dr. Levin, Rodichev, and other deputies, passed a resolution to bring in an interpellation to be answered by the Government within a fixed date, and to appoint a parliamentary commission which was to investigate the events on the spot. Three Duma deputies left at once for Bialystok, and on their return submitted to the Duma an unvarnished account which incontrovertibly established the fact that the Bialystok crime had been carefully prepared as a counter-revolutionary act, and that the peaceful Jewish population had been pitilessly shot down by the police and soldiery.

On June 5, three days after the appearance of the bloody spectre of Bialystok in the Duma hall, a bill dealing with civil equality for the Jews came up for discussion. The burning problem involving the disfranchisement of six million human beings was discussed side by side with the question of a few petty class discriminations and with the entirely separate question of women's rights. The entire treatment of the subject by the deputies showed a distinct lack of warm-hearted sympathy. Only the speech of the Jewish deputy Levin reverberated with indignation, when he reminded the Russian Assembly that he himself, being a Jew, would in ordinary times be denied the



right of residence in the capital, and that, as soon as it would be dissolved, he, a representative of the poor former legislator, would be evicted from St. Petersburg police. The bill was referred to a committee to recast it in shape.

After an interval of three days, on June 8, the Duma again occasion to discuss the subject of pogroms. Stolypin replied to the interpellation of May 8 concerning the complicity of the Government in the pogrom of 11. In a lame attempt to exonerate the authorities called forth a rebuttal from a former member of the Government, while Assistant-Minister of the Interior, Deputy Uru. He bravely disclosed the full truth. Fortified by documents, he proved the existence of a secret printing in the Police Department which was issuing "patriotic" leaflets calling upon the populace to exterminate the Jews. He quoted the words of the gendarmic officer who was the author of that particular activity: "A pogrom may be arranged against whatever you please, whether it be against ten or against ten thousand," and he concluded his speech with the words: "The danger will not disappear, so long as the influence of the state and the destinies of the land will be subject to the influence of people who, by their training, are corrupt and by their convictions pogrom makers." His words were accompanied by a storm of applause. The Government bench was showered with cries, "But the pogrom sends!" The Duma finally adopted a resolution echoing these cries of indignation.

A more passionate tone characterized the discussion in the Duma during the days of June 23-26, in connection with the report of the parliamentary commission which had

pointed to investigate the Bialystok massacre. The Duma was scandalized by the lying official communication, in which the Jews were put forward as the authors of the pogrom, and by the shameful military order of the day, in which the troops of the Bialystok garrison were thanked "for their splendid services during the time of the pogrom." The speeches delivered by the Jewish deputies, by Jacobson, who had visited Bialystok as one of the members of the parliamentary commission, and by Vinaver and Levin, gave vent to their burning national wrath. The Russian Mirabeau, Rodichev, pilloried the highly placed instigators of the Bialystok butchery. On July 7, the Duma concluded the debate by adopting a resolution denouncing in violent terms the policy of the Government, a policy of oppression, frightfulness and extermination, which had created "a situation unprecedented in the history of civilized countries," and demanding, moreover, the immediate resignation of the reactionary Ministry.

#### 5. THE SPREAD OF ANARCHY AND THE SECOND DUMA

Two days later, when the deputies appeared before the Duma, they found the building closed, and on the doors was displayed an imperial manifesto dissolving the Duma which "has encroached upon a domain outside its jurisdiction, and has engaged in investigating the acts of the authorities appointed by us." The sudden dissolution of the Duma was answered by the "Vyborg Manifesto" which was signed by the entire parliamentary Opposition, calling upon the people to refuse to pay taxes to furnish soldiers to a Government which had driven asunder their representatives. The manifesto was also signed by all the Jewish deputies who subsequently had to pay for it with imprisonment and the loss of their electoral rights.

The revolutionary terrorism which had subsided during the sessions of the Duma broke out with redoubled violence after its dissolution. Attempts upon the lives of high officials—the most terrible being the explosion of a bomb in the summer residence of Stolypin, who had been appointed Prime Minister at the dissolution of the Duma—"expropriations," i. e., the plunder of state funds and private moneys for revolutionary purposes, anarchistic labor strikes, were the order of the day. The Government retaliated with monstrous measures of oppression. A political court-martial was instituted which, in the course of five months (September, 1906-January, 1907) sentenced over one thousand people to death, among them many who were innocent or under age. Needless to say, a considerable portion of these victims were Jews.

Yet as far as the revolutionary attitude of the Jewish population was concerned, the Government was not satisfied to cope with it by "legal" executions, and therefore resorted, in addition, to the well-tried contrivance of wholesale executions, in other words, of pogroms. The chief of the political police in the city of Syedletz, Tikhonovich, engineered on August 27-28 a bloody military pogrom in that city, netting thirty dead and more than one hundred and fifty wounded Jews. The signal for the pogrom were shots fired at a sentry by an *agent provocateur*, whereupon the troops started an aimless musketry fire on the streets and even bombarded Jewish houses with grenades. Many soldiers, in a state of intoxication, committed incredible barbarities and looted Jewish property. Notwithstanding the official report of another agent of the local political police, Captain Pyetukhov, in which he asserted that the Jews had not given the slightest reason for the butchery and that the latter had been entirely engineered by the military and political

authorities, the perpetrator of the pogrom, Tikhanovich, was not only allowed to go unpunished, but received from the governor-general of Warsaw an expression of thanks for his "energy and executive skill."

This being the attitude of the ruling spheres of Russia, it was out of the question to expect any initiative from that quarter in regard to the solution of the Jewish question. The Government of Stolypin, in a circular issued on August 24, 1906, had promised "to find out without delay which restrictions, being a source of irritation and manifestly obsolete, could be immediately repealed, and which others, affecting basically the relationship of the Jewish nationality to the native population, seem to be a matter of popular conscience, and should therefore be referred to the legislative institutions." The Council of Ministers laid before the Tzar a draft of moderate reforms in favor of the Jews, pointing to the necessity of appeasing the Jews who, as a result of their grievous restrictions, "had been forced to carry on a desperate struggle against the existing order." But these representations had no effect. Nicholas II. is reported to have said on that occasion: "So long as I am Tzar, the Zhyds of Russia shall not have equal rights." During that time, the power of the so-called "Second Government," the horrible camarilla around the Tzar, was in the ascendancy, and their mainstay were the Black Hundred now organized in the reactionary "League of the Russian People." These reactionary terrorists knew only of one way to solve the Jewish question—by exterminating the Jews.

There was only one ray of hope left—the second Duma which was to be convoked in February, 1907. The election campaign was carried on under Government pressure and was hampered



by the threat of reprisals and pogroms on the part of the "Black." The elections resulted in a Duma with an anomalous complexion. The two extreme wings, the Socialists and Black Hundred, had gained in strength, whereas the Constitutional Democratic center had been weakened. The Jews had managed to elect only three deputies, apart from one Jewish Social-Democrat who ran on the ticket of his party. They were men of little renown, whereas of the deputies of the first Duma who were prosecuted for signing the Vyborg Manifesto not one was elected.

The entire energy of the new Parliament spent itself in the struggle between its left and right wing. The Jewish question was entirely relegated to the "Committee on the Freedom of Conscience." The Government had brought in a bill repealing all denominational restrictions, "except those affecting the Jews," but the Committee decided to eliminate this discriminating clause and in this manner carry through the emancipation of the Jews under the guise of the "Freedom of Conscience."

But this time, too, the hope for Jewish emancipation proved an illusion. The Duma was soon dissolved, under the pretext that a revolutionary conspiracy of the Socialistic deputies had been uncovered. On June 3, 1907, another *coup d'état* took place. The former electoral law which made it possible for the Russian democracy and the oppressed nationalities to send their representatives to the Duma was arbitrarily changed by the Tzar in order to insure a conservative pro-Government majority in the Russian parliament. There followed an era of dismal reaction.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### EXTERNAL OPPRESSION AND INTERNAL CONSOLIDATION

#### 1. THE NEW ALIGNMENTS WITHIN RUSSIAN JEWRY

The terrible quattuennium of 1903-1906 had an extraordinarily quickening effect upon the national and political thought of the classes as well as of the masses of Russian Jewry. The year of Kishinev and Homel, when the rightless Jews were made defenceless; the year of the Russo-Japanese War, when these rightless and defenceless pariahs were called upon to fight for their fatherland against the enemy from without; the year of the revolution when after the sanguinary struggle for liberty the Jews received a "constitutional charter wrapped up in pogroms"; finally, the first year of the Duma when indignant utterances of the Jewish deputies from the platform of the Duma were accompanied by the moans of the wounded Jews of Bialystok—these terrible upheavals might have proved fatal to Russian Israel had it not, during the preceding period, worked out for itself a definite *nationalistic* attitude towards the non-Jewish world. There were several varieties of this national-political formula. At the one pole stood Zicnism, with its theory of a new "exodus." At the other pole was the Social-Democratic party with its premise that "the blood of the Jew must serve as lubricating oil upon the wheels of the Russian Revolution." But even these two poles came somewhat closer to one another at the moment of the great national

danger, converging, in spite of all their differences in program and tactics, toward the central line above which floated the banner proclaiming the fight for the civil, political, and national rights of the Jewish people. Disfranchised, battered by pogroms, victimized by tyrannous Tzardom, the Jews of Russia never thought of degrading themselves to the point of begging equal rights "in instalments." They demanded their rights in full, and demanded them not merely as "the Jewish population," but as the Jewish *people*, as an autonomous nation among other nations with a culture of its own. The doctrine of "National-Cultural Autonomism"<sup>1</sup> was crystallized in definite slogans. These slogans were proclaimed, as we have seen, by the "League for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jewish People," which united on its platform all political Jewish groups, with the exception of the Social-Democratic partisans.

The years of storm and stress also forced Zionism to recede from its original position of denying the possibility of a national struggle in the Diaspora. Meeting during the most exciting days of the Russian Revolution, the Seventh Zionist Congress at Basle, held in July, 1905, mourned the loss of its prematurely cut-off leader, Theodor Herzl, and adopted a resolution voicing its strict allegiance to the Palestine idea and rejecting the temptations of Territorialism. This led to a formal split within the party, the Territorialists, headed by Zangwill, seceding and forming an organization of their own.

A year later, in November, 1906, the Russian Zionists met at Helsingfors, and adopted the platform of a "synthetic Zion-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 51 *et seq.*

ism," that is, a combination of the Palestine idea with the fight for national and cultural autonomy in the Diaspora. The guiding resolution of the Zionist Convention was couched in the following terms:

The Zionist organization of Russia sanctions the affiliation of the Zionists with the movement for liberty among the territorial nationalities of Russia, and advocates the necessity of uniting Russian Jewry upon the principles of the recognition of the Jewish nationality and its self-government in all the affairs affecting Jewish national life.

This slogan of "national rights" was followed by the Zionists during the elections to the first Imperial Duma. It was acted upon to a lesser extent by the two Socialistic factions affiliated with Zionism, the *Poale Zion* and the Zionistic Socialists<sup>1</sup>; both groups confined themselves to the demand of a minimum of cultural autonomy in the Diaspora, concentrating their entire energy upon emigration, whether it be into Palestine, as advocated by the *Poale Zion*, or into any other territory, as preached by the Zionistic Socialists. During 1905-1906, a new Socialistic party with strong nationalistic leanings came into existence. In distinction from the other two Socialistic factions, it demanded a maximum of national autonomy in the Diaspora, including even a Jewish Diet as the central organ of Jewish self-government. The members of this party called themselves "Saymists" (from *Saym*, "Diet"), or went by the name of the "Jewish Socialistic Labor Party."

In the midst of all these partisan platforms stood the "League for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jewish

[<sup>1</sup> Called by their Russian initials S. S.]



People," disregarding all party and class affiliations.<sup>1</sup> During the revolutionary period, this organization endeavored to unite all public-spirited Jews in the general Russian and national Jewish struggle for liberty, but with the decline of the revolutionary movement, the centrifugal forces within the League began to assert themselves. The divergence of views and tactics among the various groups composing the League proved stronger than their common interest in the nearest aim, which, with the advent of the political reaction, had become more remote.

Thus it came about that, at the beginning of 1907, the "League for the Attainment of Equal Rights" fell asunder into its component parts. The first to secede from it was the Zionist party, which preferred to carry on its own *Gegenwartsarbeit* under a separate party flag—although, properly considered, a far-reaching activity on behalf of national-Jewish rejuvenation in the lands of the Diaspora was scarcely compatible with the fundamental principle of political Zionism, the "negation of the *Golus*." The Helsingfors program of "synthetic Zionism," the child of the liberty movement, shrank more and more, as the hopes for a Jewish emancipation in Russia receded into the distance.

Out of the "League for Equal Rights" came further the "Jewish People's Group," a party which opposed the Zionist idea altogether and repudiated the attempt to find new Jewish centers outside of Russia. This group, headed by the well-known political leader, M. Vinaver, placed in the center of its program the fight for civil emancipation, in close contact with

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 111 et seq.

the progressive elements of the Russian people, whereas in the question of national-Jewish interests it confined itself to the principle of "self-determination" and to the freedom of Jewish culture in general outlines, without putting forward concrete demands of Jewish autonomy. The People's Group counted among its adherents many representatives of the Jewish *intelligenzia* who had more or less discarded the idea of assimilation and had come to recognize the necessity of a minimum of "Jewish-national rights."

The third group, which also took its rise in the "League for Equal Rights," and received the name *Volkspartei*, or Jewish National Party, stood firmly on the platform of national Jewish policies. The underlying principle of this organization, or, more correctly, of this far-reaching social current, which has its origin in the historic development of the Jewish people, was the same principle of national-cultural autonomism which had long before the revolution pursued its own line of development parallel to Zionism.<sup>1</sup> The simultaneous struggle for civil and national rights, the creation of a full-fledged national community, instead of the *Kullusgemeinde* of Western Europe, an autonomous national school, and the rights of both languages, the Hebrew and the Yiddish—such was, in general outlines, the program of the *Volkspartei*. At the same time, this party, taking the historic idea of the transplantation of Jewish centers in the Diaspora as its point of departure, recognized the emigration to America and the colonization of Palestine as great national factors destined to create two new centers of Judaism, one quantitatively powerful center in North Amer-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 51.

ica, and a smaller national center, but qualitatively, from the point of view of cultural purity, more valuable, in Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the "League for Equal Rights" gave birth to a fourth party, the Jewish Democratic Group, which is distinguished from the People's Group by its stronger leaning towards the political parties of the Left, the Russian radicals and Socialists.

Since the dissolution of the "League," these four groups have, as a rule, united in various coalitions. They are all represented on the permanent council at St. Petersburg which, together with the deputies of the Imperial Duma, discusses Jewish political questions as they arise from time to time. Thus, there emerged in Jewish public life a form of representation reflecting the national and political ideas which had assumed concrete shape during the years of the Russian revolution and counter-revolution. The only organization standing outside these federated groups and their common platform of national Jewish politics is the Jewish Social-Democratic party, known as the "Bund," which is tied down by its class program and is barred by it from co-operating with the bourgeoisie, or a non-class organization, even within the domain of national Jewish interests.

<sup>1</sup> Beginning with the year 1905, the emigration to America once more assumed enormous proportions. During 1905-1906, the years of revolution and pogroms, nearly 230,000 Jews left Russia for the United States. During the following years the figure was somewhat lower, but still continued on a fairly high level, amounting to 50,000-75,000 annually. In Palestine, the colonization went apace, and with it the cultural activities. Several schools, with a purely national program, such as the gymnasia in Jaffa and Jerusalem, and other institutions, came into being.

## 2. THE TRIUMPH OF THE "BLACK HUNDRED"

All these strivings and slogans were severely hit by the *coup d'état* of June 3, 1907, when a large part of what the revolution had achieved was rendered null and void. Owing to the amendment of the suffrage law by this clumsy act of autocratic despotism, the constitution became the handmaid of Tsardom. The ruling power slipped into the hands of the Black Hundred, the extreme monarchistic groups, which were organized in the "League of the Russian People" and openly advocated the restoration of autocracy. The head of the League, Dubrovin, congratulated the emperor upon his act of violence of June 3, and was assured in reply that henceforth the "League of the Russian People" would be the "trusted bulwark" of the Throne. Nicholas might have said with greater justification that the Throne was the bulwark of the League of the Black Hundred, the hirelings of the reaction, who were supplied with millions of rubles from the imperial counter-revolutionary fund, the so-called "black money." Street heroes and pogrom perpetrators became the masters of Russian politics. The sinister forces began the liquidation of the emancipation movement. Day after day the newspaper columns were crammed with reports concerning the arrests of politically "undependable" persons and the executions of revolutionaries. The gallows and the jails became, as it were, the emblems of governmental authority. The spectacle of daily executions which continued for two years (1907-1909) forced from the breast of the grand old man, Leo Tolstoi, the desperate cry: "I cannot keep silent."

Yet Nicholas II. continued his rôle of hangman. While young men and women, among them a great number of Jews,



met their fate on the scaffold, the rioters and murderers from among the Black Hundred, who during the days of October, 1905, alone had ruined hundreds of Jewish communities, remained unpunished. The majority of them were not even put on trial, for the local authorities who were charged with that duty were afraid lest the judicial inquiry might establish their own complicity in the pogroms. But even those who were prosecuted and convicted on the charge of murder and plunder were released from punishment by orders from St. Petersburg. As a rule, the local branch of the League of the Russian People would appeal to the Tzar to pardon the participants in the "patriotic demonstrations"—the official euphemism for anti-Jewish riots—and the invariable response was an immediate pardon which was ostentatiously published in the newspapers. The petitions to the Tzar applying for the pardon of convicted perpetrators of violence went regularly through the Minister of Justice, the ferocious reactionary and anti-Semite Shcheglovitov. No one doubted that this amnesty was granted by virtue of an agreement concluded in 1905 between the Government and the pogrom ringleaders, guaranteeing immunity to the anti-Jewish rioters.

A different treatment was meted out to the Jewish self-defence contingents, which had the courage to oppose the murderers. They were dealt with ruthlessly. In Odessa, a court-martial sentenced six young Jews, members of a self-defence group which was active during the October pogroma, to long terms of hard labor, characterizing the "crime" of these Jews in the following words: "For having participated in a conspiracy having for its object the overthrow of the existing order by means of arming the Jewish proletariat for an attack upon the police and troops." This characterization

was not far from the mark. The men engaged in defending the lives of their brothers and sisters against the murderous hordes were indeed guilty of a criminal offence against the "existing order," since the latter sought its support in these hordes, of whom "the police and troops," as was shown by the judicial inquiries, had formed a part. The appeal taken from this judgment to the highest military court was dismissed and the sentence sustained (August, 1907). The Jews who had done nothing beyond defending life and property could expect neither pardon nor mitigation. This lurid contrast between the release of the pogrom perpetrators and the conviction of the pogrom victims was interpreted as a direct challenge to the Jewish population on the part of Nicholas II. and his frenzied accomplices.

The Black Hundred had a right to feel that it was their day. They knew that the League of the Russian People formed, to use the phrase then frequently applied to it in the press, a "Second Government," which wielded greater power than the official quasi-constitutional Government of Stolypin. The dregs of the Russian populace gave full vent to their base instincts. In Odessa, hordes of League members made it a regular practice to assault the Jews upon the streets with rubber sticks, and, in case of resistance, to fire at them with pistols. Grigoryev, the city-governor, one of the few honest administrators, who made an attempt to restrain this black terrorism, was dismissed in August, 1907,<sup>1</sup> with the result that

<sup>1</sup>When the same official waited upon the Tzar with his report concerning the events at Odessa, he was amazed to see the Tzar come out to him with the badge of the League of the Russian People upon his chest—the same badge which was worn by the rioters in Odessa. He was subsequently given to understand that the Tzar had done so demonstratively to show his solidarity with the hordes of the Black Hundred.

the assaults upon the Jews in the streets assumed an even more sanguinary character. All complaints of the Jews were dismissed by the authorities with the remark: "All this is taking place because the Jews were most prominent in the revolution."

The Government represented by Stolypin, which was anxious to save at least the appearance of a constitutional régime, was often forced to give way before the secret Government of the Black League, which commanded the full sympathy of the Tsar. By orders of the League, Stolypin decreed that one hundred Jewish students who had passed the competitive examination at the Kiev Polytechnicum should be excluded from that institution and that a like number of Russian students who had failed to pass should be admitted instead. The director and dean of the institution protested against this clumsy violation of academic freedom, but their protest was left unheeded, whereupon they tendered their resignation (September, 1907). Following upon this, the Ministry of Public Instruction, yielding to the pressure of the "Second Government," restored the shameful percentage norm, restricting the admission of Jews to institutions of higher learning, which, during the preceding years, had been disregarded by the autonomous professorial councils.

About the same time the Senate handed down a decision declaring the Zionist organization, which had been active in Russia for many years, to be illegal, and giving full scope to the police authorities to proceed with repressive measures against the members of the movement.

### 3. THE THIRD, OR BLACK, DUMA

Such was the atmosphere which surrounded the elections to the third Imperial Duma in the fall of 1907. The reactionary electoral law of June 3 barred from the Russian Parliament the most progressive and democratic elements of the Empire. Moreover, by splitting the electoral assemblies into class and national curias, the Government succeeded in preventing the election of any considerable number of Jewish deputies. The elections took place under severe pressure from the authorities. Many "dangerous" nominees of the Left were arbitrarily put under arrest on framed-up political charges and, pending the conclusion of the investigation, were temporarily barred from running for office. In some places, the Black Hundred openly threatened the Jews with pogroms, if they dared to nominate their own candidates. As a result, only two Jewish deputies managed to get into the Duma—Friedman from the government of Kovno, and Nisselovich from Courland.

The third Duma, nicknamed the Black, assembled in November, 1907. It had an overwhelming majority of reactionaries and anti-Semites. This majority of the Right was made up of the coalition of the conservative Center, represented by the "Octobrist" party,<sup>1</sup> with the extreme Right wing, the Russian "Nationalists," and Black Hundred. Whenever the Jewish question came up for discussion, the reactionary bloc was always able to drown the voices of the weak opposition, the "Cadet" party (Constitutional Democrats), the *Trudoviki* ("the Labor Party"), and the handful of Socialists.

The attitude of this reactionary Duma toward the Jewish question was revealed at its early sessions when the bill concern-

[<sup>1</sup> So called because it based its program on the imperial manifesto of October 17, 1905. See above, p. 127.]



ing the inviolability of the person was the subject of discussion. The opposition demanded the establishment of the full freedom of movement as the most fundamental condition of the inviolability of the person, but the majority of the Right managed to insert in the bill the following stipulation: "No one shall be limited in the right of choosing his place of residence and in moving from place to place, except in the cases set forth in the law, and excepting the Jews who arrive in localities situated outside the Pale of Settlement" (1908). In this wise the Russian legislators cleverly succeeded in harmonizing the principle of the inviolability of the person with the life-long imprisonment of millions of people in the huge prison house known as the Pale of Settlement.

Their solicitude for the maintenance of this vast ghetto was so intense that the reactionary Government of Stolypin was often the butt of criticism because it did not always show sufficient regard for this holy institution. The fact of the matter was that in May, 1907, Stolypin had issued a circular ordering the governors to stop the expulsion from the interior governments of those Jews who had settled there before August, 1906, and possessed "a family and a domestic establishment" in those provinces, provided they were "harmless to the public order and do not arouse the dissatisfaction of the Christian population." As a result of this circular, several hundred, possibly several thousand, Jewish families were saved from expulsion. In consequence, the Right brought in an interpellation calling upon the Government to explain on what ground it had dared to issue this "charter of privileges" to the Jews. The interpellation, of course, proved effective, and the Government did its utmost to nullify the exemptive

provisions of the circular. The anti-Semitic Duma betrayed the same spirit on another occasion by rejecting in the same year (1903) the bill, introduced by the Opposition, conferring the right of visiting the health resorts or watering-places upon all sufferers, without distinction of nationality.

Yet these legal discriminations were not the worst feature of the third Duma. Even more excruciating was the way in which the Right wing of the Russian Parliament permitted itself to make sport of Judaism and things Jewish. It almost seemed as if the devotees of autocracy, the members of the extreme Right, had come to the Russian Parliament for the express purpose of showering abuse not only on the Russian constitution but also on parliamentary government in general. The hirelings of Nicholas II. danced like a horde of savages over the dead body of the emancipation movement, singing hymns in praise of slavery and despotism. Creatures of the street, the reactionary deputies drenched the tribune of the Imperial Duma with mud and filth, and, when dealing with the Jews, they resorted to methods similar to those which were in vogue among their accomplices upon the streets of the devastated cities. The term *Zhyd* and the adjective *Zhydovski*, in addition to other scurrilous epithets, became the most favored terms of their vocabulary. They inserted formulas and amendments in various bills submitted to the Duma which were deliberately intended to insult the Jews. They called upon the Ministry of War to bring in a bill excluding the Jews from the army, in view of the fact that the Jewish soldiers had proved an element "which corrupts the army in the time of peace and is extremely unreliable in the time of war" (1908). They supported a law barring the Jews from the military

Academy of Medicine, on the ground that the Jewish surgeons had carried on a revolutionary propaganda in the army during the Russo-Japanese War (1910). The Octobrists demanded the exclusion of the Jews from the office of Justice of the Peace, for the reason that their admission was subversive of the principles of a "Christian State" (1909). The remark made on that occasion by Karaulov, a deputy of the Opposition, "Where there is no equality, where there are pariah nationalities, there is no room for a constitutional order," was met from the benches of the Right with the retort: "Thank God for it; we don't want it." A similar cynical outburst of laughter greeted the warning of Rodichev: "Without the abolition of the Jewish disabilities, there is no access to the Temple of Freedom."

The two Jewish Duma deputies did their utmost to get a hearing, but the Black Hundred generally interrupted their speeches by wild and offensive exclamations. In 1910, the Jewish deputy Nisselovich succeeded in obtaining the signatures of one hundred and sixty-six deputies for a legal draft, abrogating the Pale of Settlement. It was laid before the Duma, but resulted merely in fruitless debates. It was referred to a committee which quietly strangled the bill.

#### 4. NEW JEWISH DISABILITIES

Spurred on by the reactionary Duma, the Government went to even greater lengths in its policy of Jewish discrimination. Premier Stolypin, who was getting constantly nearer to the Right, was entirely oblivious of the promise, made by him in 1905, to remove immediately all restrictions which are "the source of irritation and are manifestly obsolete." On the con-

trary, the Ministry presided over by him was systematically engaged in inventing new grievous disabilities. The Jewish deputy Friedman was fully justified in declaring, in a speech delivered in February, 1910, that even "during the most terrible time which the Jews had to live through under Plehve no such cruelties and barbarities were practised as at the present moment." Wholesale expulsions of Jews from the cities situated outside the Pale of Settlement and from the villages within the Pale assumed the character of an epidemic. In the spring of 1910 the Government decided on sacrificing to the Moloch of Jew-hatred a whole hecatomb by expelling twelve hundred Jewish families from Kiev—a measure which aroused a cry of indignation beyond the confines of Russia. The acts of the Government were marked by a refinement of cruelty, for even little children, invalids, and aged people were pitilessly evicted. Particular enmity was shown in the ejection of Jews who had committed the "crime" of visiting summer resorts outside the city lines. The Senate handed down a decision to the effect that the Jewish soldiers who had participated in the defence of the besieged fortress of Port Arthur during the Japanese War were not entitled to the right of residence which had been granted by a former decree<sup>1</sup> to the Jewish soldiers who had taken part in the war.

The spiritual murder of Jewish school children was the function of the black Minister of Enlightenment, with the significant name of Schwartz. The school norm, which, before the revolution, had been applied merely as a Government order, without legislative sanction, was formulated by him into a law and ratified by the Tzar in September, 1908. Henceforth, all

<sup>1</sup> See p. 93 *et seq.*



institutions of higher learning in the Empire were open to the Jews only in a proportion not exceeding three per cent. of the total number of students for the capitals, five per cent. for the educational establishments outside the Pale, and ten per cent. for the Pale of Settlement. In view of the fact that during the emancipation movement the influx of Jews to the higher schools had been very great, so that their number was now vastly in excess of the established norm, it would have become necessary for the higher schools to bar completely all new candidates until the number of Jewish students had been reduced to the prescribed percentage limits. For a while the Minister recoiled from taking this cruel step, and permitted for the next few years the admission of Jewish students within the limits of the percentage norm, calculating the latter in relation to the number of the *newly admitted* Christian students during a given year, without regard to the Jewish students admitted previously. Subsequently, however, many educational institutions closed their doors completely to the Jews, referring, by way of explanation, to the "completion of the norm" by the former pupils. Once more, bands of the "martyrs of learning" could be seen wending their ways toward the universities in foreign lands.

A year later, in 1909, the percentage restrictions governing the secondary schools were also placed on the statute books. The proportion of Jewish admissions was fixed between five and fifteen per cent.—i. e., slightly in excess of the old norm—and was extended in its application to private educational institutions with the prerogatives of government schools. This law spelled ruin to many gymnasia and schools of commerce which, though directed by Christians, were almost entirely

dependent on Jewish support, eighty per cent. of their school population consisting of Jews. As for the gymnasia maintained by Jews, with very few exceptions, they never were able to obtain from the Ministry the status of government institutions.

The educational Hamans, however, went a step further, and in March, 1911, secured an ukase of the Tzar extending the percentage norm to the "externs":<sup>1</sup> henceforward Jews were to be admitted to the examination for the "certificate of maturity" or for the completion of a part of the curriculum only in a certain proportion to the number of Christian externs. In point of fact, however, there were no Christian externs, since only the Jews who had failed to find admission to the schools were forced to present themselves for examination as externs. In consequence, the enormous number of Jewish children who had been barred from the schools by the percentage norm were deprived of their right to receive a testimonial from a secondary school. This law was passed during a brief interruption in the sessions of the Duma and was never submitted to it. The deputies of the Opposition brought in an interpellation concerning this action, but the "Black Parliament" laid the matter on the table, and the law which lacked all legal basis went into operation.

Swayed more and more by the tendencies of a reactionary Russian nationalism, Stolypin's Government set out to uproot the national-cultural institutions of the "alien" races in Russia. The Poles, the Finns, and other nationalities became

[<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 351.]

[<sup>2</sup> The name given to the graduation certificate of a gymnasium. German it is similarly called *Reifezeugnis*.]

the victims of this policy. The lash of oppression was also applied to Jewish cultural life. In 1910, Stolypin issued a circular impressing Russian officialdom with the idea that the cultural and educational societies of the "aliens" contributed towards arousing in them "a narrow national-political self-consciousness" and towards "the strengthening of national separatism," and that for this reason all the societies of the Ukrainians and Jews which were established for the purpose of fostering a separate national culture should be prohibited.

##### 5. THE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL OF RUSSIAN JEWRY

This new blow was aimed right at the heart of Judaism — For after the revolution, when the political struggle had subsided, the Jewish *intelligenza* directed its entire energy into the channel of national-cultural endeavors. Profiting by the law of 1906, granting the freedom of assemblies and meetings, they founded everywhere cultural, educational, and economic (co-operative and credit) societies. In 1908, the Jewish Literary Society was established in St. Petersburg, which soon counted over a hundred branches in the provinces. The same year saw the formation of the Jewish Historico-Ethnographic Society which began to publish a quarterly review under the name *Yevreyskaya Starina* ("Jewish Antiquity").<sup>1</sup> The oldest educational organization among the Jews, the Society for the Diffusion of Enlightenment, enlarged its activity and was endeavoring to create a new type of national Jewish school.

A multitude of other cultural societies and circles sprang into life with the sanction of the authorities throughout the

[<sup>1</sup> It was edited by the writer of the present work, S. M. Dubnow.]

length and breadth of the Pale. Everywhere lectures and conferences were held and heated debates were carried on, centering around national-cultural problems. Particularly passionate were the discussions about the position of Hebrew and Yiddish in public life, in school and in literature, leading to the alignment of two parties, the Hebraists and the Yiddishists. The lectures, conferences and debates themselves were generally carried on in one of these languages, mostly in the Yiddish vernacular.

In spite of their crudities, these partisan conflicts were a clear indication of the advance of national self-consciousness and of the desire for the upbuilding of a genuine Jewish life upon the concrete foundations of a cultural autonomy. Of course, anti-Semitic Tzardom could not be expected to sympathize with this inner regeneration of Jewry, and, as in the time of Plehve, it directed its blow at the Jewish-national organizations. Here and there the blow was effective. In 1911, the Jewish Literary Society, with its one hundred and twenty branches, which had displayed an energetic activity in the establishment of libraries and the arrangement of public lectures, went out of existence. In general, however, the attacks directed against the Jewish spirit proved much more difficult of realization than the attacks upon Jewish property. The cultural activities continued in their course, defying all external restrictions and persecutions.

The literary revival, which had started in the nineties, and was but temporarily interrupted by the stormy events of the revolutionary period, also came into its own again. The rejuvenation of both the national and the popular language, finding its expression in a widely ramified Jewish literature,



proceeded along paralld lines. The periodical press in Hebrew, represented by the two dailies, *ha-Tsefirah* in Warsaw, and *ha-Zeman* in Vilna, and the monthly *ha-Shiloah* in Odessa, found its counterpart in a popular press in Yiddish, reaching hundreds of thousands of readers, such as the dailies *Fraind* ("The Friend," published since 1903 in St. Petersburg), *Haint* ("To-day"), *Moment*, and others, in Warsaw. In addition there was the Jewish press in Russian: the weeklies *Voskhod*, *Razsvyet*, *Yevreyski Mir* in St. Petersburg, and a few other publications.

In the domain of higher literary productivity, new forces were being constantly added to the old ones. Besides the great national bard Bialik there appeared a number of gifted poets: Shneur, the singer of "storm and stress," of doubts and negations, the romantically inclined Jacob Kohan, Fichman, Reisin, David Einhorn, and many other youthful, as yet scarcely unfolded talents. J. L. Perez found a rival in Shalom Asch, the portrayer of patriarchal Jewish life in the provincial towns of Poland (*Die Städtel*, "The Provincial Town," 1904), and the author of charming sketches from Jewish life, as well as a playwright of note whose productions have met with tumultuous applause both on the Jewish and the non-Jewish stage (*Moshiah's Zeiten*, "Messianic Times," *Gott von Nekomo*, "God of Revenge," *Shabbetai Zewi*, *Yihus*, "Blue Blood"). His numerous co-workers in Yiddish letters have devoted themselves with youthful enthusiasm to the cultivation of this branch of Jewish literature.

In Hebrew fiction a number of talented writers and a group of novelists, who publish their works mostly in the *ha-Shiloah*, came to the fore. The successor of Ahad Ha'am in the editor-

ship of this periodical, Dr. Joseph Klausner, occupies a prominent place in Jewish literature as publicist, critic, and partly as historian. If we add to these talents the not inconsiderable number of writers who are domiciled in Galicia, Palestine, Germany, and America, and draw their inspiration from the vast Russian-Jewish reservoir, the growth of Jewish literature during the last decade stands forth in bold relief.

This progress of inner Jewish life in Russia is truly remarkable. In spite of the catastrophes which have desolated Russian Jewry during the first decade of the twentieth century, the productivity of the Jewish national spirit has gone on unchecked, and the national-Jewish culture has struck out in all directions. The assimilationist postures, which have been generally abandoned, are only held by a few loyal disciples of a past age. It is true that the process of elemental assimilation, which penetrates from the surrounding atmosphere into Judaism through the medium of language, school and literature continues to affect Jewish life with the same force as of old. But there can be no doubt that it is effectively counterbalanced by the centripetal factor of a national culture which is becoming more and more powerful. Large as is the number of religious apostates who have deserted Judaism under the effect of external pressure, and of moral renegades who have abandoned the national ethical ideals of Judaism in favor of a new-fangled decadent aestheticism, it is negligible when compared with the compact mass of Russian Jewry and with the army of intellectuals whose national self-consciousness has been deepened by suffering. As in all previous critical moments in the history of the Jews, the spirit of the nation, defying its new tormentors, has grown stronger in the worst of days.

The Hamans of Russia who have attempted to crush the Eternal People have failed as signally as their predecessors in Persia, Syria and Byzantium.

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### RUSSIAN JEWRY SINCE 1911

Being loath to cross the threshold of the present, we shall stop at the year 1911, terminating the first decade of the Thirty Years' War waged by Russian Tzardom against Jewry since 1881. The more recent phases of this war are still fresh in our memory. To put the new campaign of Jew-hatred in its proper light, it will suffice to point out its most conspicuous landmarks which stand out by their extraordinarily sinister features. In 1911, the organizations of the Black Hundred, with the help of their accomplices in the Duma and in the Government circles, manufactured the monstrous "Beilis case." The murder of a Russian boy in Kiev, of a family belonging to a band of thieves, and the discovery of the body in the neighborhood of a brick-kiln owned by a Jew provided the anti-Semites with an opportunity to bring forward the old charge of ritual murder. In the beginning the Government was somewhat uncertain as to the attitude it should adopt towards the mysterious Kiev murder. But a political occurrence which took place at the time put an end to its vacillation. In September, 1911, Premier Stolypin was assassinated in a Kiev theatre in the presence of the Tzar and the dignitaries of State. The assassin, by the name of Bogrov, proved to be the son of a lawyer who was of Jewish extraction, though he had long before turned his back upon his people—a semi-anarchist, who at one time had been

active as police agent for some mysterious revolutionary purposes. The Jewish extraction of the father of the assassin was enough to produce a paroxysm of fury in the camp of the anti-Semitic reactionaries who had lost in the person of Stolypin an exalted patron. In Kiev preparations were openly made for a Jewish massacre, but the Government was afraid that the proposed wholesale execution of Jews would mar the festive solemnity of the Tzar's visit to Kiev. The authorities made it known that the Tzar was not in favor of riots, and a bloody street pogrom was averted.

In its place, however, a bloodless pogrom, extending over two years, was arranged in the form of the Beilis case. Minister of Justice Shcheglovitov, a former Liberal, who had become a fanatical partisan of the Black Hundred, made up his mind to impart to the trial a glaring ritual coloring. The original Judicial inquiry having failed to uncover any traces of Jewish complicity, the Minister of Justice ordered a new special inquiry and constantly changed the personnel of the investigating and prosecuting officials, until he finally secured a bill of indictment in which the whole case was represented as a ritual crime, committed by the Jew Beilis with the participation of "undiscovered persons."

For two years, the Beilis case provided the pabulum for a wild anti-Semitic campaign which was carried on among the so-called better classes, on the streets, in the press, and in the Imperial Duma. The court trial which took place in Kiev in October, 1913, was expected to crown with success the criminal design harbored by the Minister of Justice and the Black Hundred, but the expectations of the Government were disappointed. In spite of a carefully selected court personnel, which



consisted of anti-Semitic judges representing the Crown, and of sworn jurymen, ignorant peasants and burghers who believed in the ritual murder legend, Beilis was acquitted, and the authorities found it impossible to fasten the guilt upon the Jews.

Exasperated by the failure, the Government wreaked its vengeance upon the liberal-minded intellectuals and newspaper men, who, by their agitation against the hideous libel, had wrested the prey from the hands of the Black Hundred. Scores of legal actions were instituted not only against newspaper editors and contributors but also against the St. Petersburg Bar Association, which had adopted a resolution protesting against the method pursued by Shcheglovitov in the Beilis trial. The sensational case against the metropolitan lawyers was tried in June, 1914, one month before the declaration of the World War, and terminated in a verdict of guilty for twenty-five lawyers, on the charge of "having agitated against the Government."

The triennium preceding the World War witnessed the rise of a new danger for Judaism, this time coming from Poland. The extraordinary intensity of the national and religious sentiment of the Poles, accentuated by the political oppression which for more than a hundred years had been inflicted upon them, particularly by the hands of Russian despotism, has, during the last decade, been directed against the Jewish people. The economic progress made by the Jews in the two industrial centers of Russian Poland, in Warsaw and Lodz, gave rise to the boycott agitation. Polish anti-Semites proclaimed the slogan "Do not buy from Jews!", aiming the cry specifically against the "Litvaks," that is, the hundreds of thousands of

Russian Jews who, in the course of the last few decades, had been chiefly instrumental in the economic advancement of those two centers. The cloak beneath which this agitation was carried on was purely that of Polish nationalism: the Russian Jews were alleged, on the one hand, "to Russify Poland," and, accused, on the other hand, of an opposite tendency, of asserting themselves as the members of a separate Jewish nationality, with a press and a social organization of their own, which refuses to be merged in the Polish people.

The anti-Semitic movement in Poland, which began shortly after the revolution of 1905, assumed extraordinary dimensions in 1910-1911, when the boycott became a fierce economic pogrom, reaching its culmination in 1912, during the election campaign to the fourth Imperial Duma. The Jewish electors of Warsaw formed a majority, and were, therefore, in a position to send a Jewish deputy to the Duma. Yet out of consideration for the national susceptibilities of the Poles who insisted on sending as a representative of the Polish capital one of their "own," a Christian, the Jews were willing to accept a Polish candidate, provided the latter was not an anti-Semite. When, however, the Polish election committee, disregarding the feelings of the Jews, nominated the anti-Semitic candidate Kukhazhevski, the Jews gave their votes to the Polish Socialistic nominee Yaghello, who carried the election. This attitude of the Jews aroused a storm of indignation among the higher classes of Polish society. An anti-Jewish campaign, marked by extraordinary bitterness, was set in motion, and in the press and on the streets the Jews were nicknamed "Beilises," an echo of the ritual murder legend which had given rise to such horrors in ancient Catholic



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\* Page 125, line 3 from bottom, read Volhynia, instead of Podolia. The mistake is due to a confusion with Kamenetz.

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